ILLICIT SEX AND LEGITIMATE SUBJECTS: VICTORIAN CONSTRUCTIONS OF PROSTITUTION AND THE WORKING-CLASS FAMILY

By

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For Helen, who showed me the possibilities, and for Kashif, who helped me to realize them.

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This study analyzes the ways in which the Victorian ideology of domesticity and narratives of fallen women intersect legal, medical, and socio-political discourses. An inter-textual reading of institutional and popular texts reveals that narratives of prostitution performed the important ideological work of restructuring working-class sexual and family relations according to bourgeois ideologies of gender. Within this ideology, the production of the "prostitute" (the figure of the illegitimate outside of sexual exchange) is necessary to the production of "wife" and "mother" (the ground of legitimate sexual exchange). An analysis of Lock Hospital and Asylum Reports, the 1871 Royal Commission Investigation into the Operation of the Contagious Diseases Acts, and Foundling Hospital Petitions proves that fears of a contaminating female sexuality intersect bourgeoisie anxieties about containing the working-classes and motivate state controls of working-class women's sexuality. The analysis then critiques these fears as represented in the

novels *Ruth*, *Adam Bede*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Mary Barton* and *David Copperfield*. Finally, a reading of working-class women's autobiographies analyzes the effects of state controls and popular discourses of domesticity and prostitution on women's lives and the strategies these women evolved with which to meet their situations.

CHAPTER 1
THE "FALLEN" WOMAN AND THE WORKING-CLASS FAMILY

> Cheap is when you want less than pleasure, a baby, or a hundred dollars.
>
> Carol Leigh (The Scarlet Harlot)

This study explores one strand of what Mary Poovey describes as "the ideological work of gender." I am particularly interested in the ideological work of Victorian constructions of "fallen women": precisely what constitutes a fall? Who is subject to the fall and what sanctions does it entail? The category of "fallen woman" was important to a wide range of Victorian discourses. This indicates that it performed an ideological *work* across social, political, legal, and medical registers. In fact, Victorian classifications of fallenness helped to redefine working-class gender roles and to assimilate a migrating rural workforce to the labor demands of the industrial city. As Foucault argues, "for the state to function in the way that it does, there must be, between male and female or adult and child, quite specific relations of domination which have their own configuration and relative autonomy" (*Power/Knowledge 188*). The nineteenth century's narratives of fallenness reveal important components of these

"relations of domination," both between the middle and working class and between men and women. One of the most crucial function of middle-class Victorian constructions of "fallen" women was to effectively police working-class families.

Amanda Anderson notes in *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces: The Rhetoric of Fallenness in Victorian Culture*, that "fallen woman" signifies "a range of feminine identities: prostitutes, unmarried women who engage in sexual relations with men, victims of seduction, adulteresses, as well as variously delinquent lower-class women" (2). This construction is so broad that virtually any working-class woman could be suspected of prostitution. This conflation of working-class women with prostitution is painfully clear in a passage from the 1871 Royal Investigation into the Operation of the Contagious Diseases Acts:

> (Commissioner): Do not you find there are young women who follow some trade, such as the selling of lucifer matches, who are prostitutes in disguise? (Police Inspector Anniss): Yes, that is the most difficult class we have, because they get about in the fields and lanes at night...[and] do a great deal of damage... They travel about as tinkers, &c., who do anything but work, and do a great deal of damage in communicating disease at the present time. (22)

This passage elucidates the anxieties underlying Victorian classifications of women's sexuality. Police and Lock Hospital reports demonstrate a need to classify working-class women according to their labor. Working-class women whose labor could not be identified, or whose means of subsistence

seemed, according to middle-class gender roles, inappropriate for women, were suspected of being prostitutes in disguise. Police Inspector Anniss curiously conflates a failure to *work* with *disease*: the tinkers "do anything but work" and "a great deal of damage in communicating disease." This need to categorize working-class women as either respectable workers or dangerous prostitutes reflects the importance to the industrial state of regulating women's labor. According to Anderson, this anxiety and confusion is also emblematic of "more general cultural anxieties about the very possibility of deliberative moral action: to 'fall' is, after all, to lose control" (2). Thus Victorian "depictions of prostitutes and fallen women in Victorian culture typically dramatize predicaments of agency and uncertainties about the nature of self-hood, character, and society" (Anderson 1).

Anderson, however, is particularly concerned with the class and gender implications of representations of fallen women as lacking the autonomy of the male subject. While Anderson focuses on fallenness as one register through which middle-class agency is negotiated,[1] I am more concerned with

[1]Anderson is particularly concerned with the *functions* of fallenness in Victorian culture: the figure of fallenness as hyperdetermined, in stark contrast to the self-determined character of the bourgeois male (10); the ways in which "fallenness is rearticulated to secular and scientific paradigms" and "ultimately served to loosen religious and ethical moorings (3); its centrality to the Victorian debates between idealism and materialism (3); the complex ways in which fallenness challenged models of feminine virtue (15); the trope of metalepsis, in which "the fallen figure is transformed from an effect into a cause, or vice versa," in

what fallenness can suggest about working-class women's agency. The figure of the fallen woman is, to use a phrase from Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, one of the "sites where political history obviously converged with the history of sexuality as well as with that of the novel to produce a specific kind of individual" (21). She argues that:

> By the early decades of the nineteenth century, middle-class writers and intellectuals can be seen to take the virtues embodied by the domestic woman and to pit them against working-class culture. It took nothing less than the destruction of a much older concept of the household for industrialization to overcome working-class resistance. (8)

Among the most crucial of working-class familial structures targeted for reform was the structure of sexual relations. J.A.D. Blaikie, in "The Country and the City: Sexuality and Social Class in Victorian Scotland" argues that, contrary to the city-dweller's popular myth of peasant virtue, the sexual mores of rural agrarian populations placed far less emphasis on paternity and legitimacy than did city dwellers in general and the middle class in particular. Pre-marital intercourse (and its possible consequences) did not have the same social taboo for much of the working class that it did for the middle class. For the middle class, "family fortunes hinged upon the prudent choice of partners [and] courtship demanded an open etiquette, whilst indiscretions were concealed, taboo; with the rural working class, where no such

which the fallen woman oscillates "between victim and threat, effect and cause" (16).

constraints operated, the situation was reversed" (Blaikie 87). The "problem" of illegitimacy, then, "is not just about sexual relations; it concerns the whole process of production and reproduction" (85). Thus, in rural agricultural communities where children's labor-power could be an economic asset, premarital intercourse often functioned as a guarantee of a woman's fertility. Quite contrary to rural norms, urban working-class laboring and living conditions made illegitimate children a monetary drain on the state and an embarrassment to codes of middle-class respectability.[2] Simultaneously, nineteenth-century capitalist rhetoric claimed that the lazy, unproductive poor were responsible for their own poverty. Discourses moralizing poverty and working-class degeneracy fueled middle-class efforts to "reform" working-class sexual and family relations. Hence, "housing and courtship provided the active loci for reform" (Blaikie 84).

The narrative repetition of fallenness seems especially important when read against the common complaints of the huge body of social workers deployed in Victorian England: they deplored the working-class's disregard for legal marriage

[2]Also see Jacques Donzelot's *The Policing of Families*, a history of the family chronicling France's evolution from Foundling hospitals to public assistance. He argues that the social, medical, charitable, educational and religious interventions into the lives of the urban working-class were a "social economy" designed to "diminish the social cost of their reproduction and obtain an optimum number of workers at a minimum public expense: in short, what is customarily termed philanthropy" (16).

certificates, their willingness to change sexual partners and domiciles without any formal contractual agreement, and the undefinability of family structures which were no longer organized along the lines of previous extended or kinship structures common to pre-industrial agrarian living conditions, nor yet along the lines of the single-household family structure of the middle-class city dweller.[3]

The move to reform working-class culture operated simultaneously on several different registers. Embedded in the economic conditions of an urbanizing industrial economy, the discourses of politics, popular fiction, social science, law, medicine, the popular press, charities, religious institutions and philanthropical societies, all worked within and on one another. As Charles Bernheimer in *Figures of Ill-Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century France* says:

[3]For a more detailed development of the specific working-class conditions attacked by middle-class sociologists, philanthropists, charity and rescue workers, see also Ellen Ross's *Love and Toil*, especially the chapter " 'Miss, I wish I had your Life': The Poor of London and Their Chroniclers"; William Acton's *Prostitution Considered in Its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects*, and "Observations on Illegitimacy in the London Parish's of St. Marleybone, St. Pancras, and St. George of Southwark"; Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor;* and Frank Mort's *Dangerous Sexualities*, especially the chapter "Decoding Morality: The Domain of the Sexual." Anderson, Armstrong, Langland, and Walkowitz all make reference to the same phenomenon. In earlier studies, Linda Mahood's *The Magdalenes: Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century* and Frances Finnegan's *Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York* also discuss the sexual attitudes of the working class.

> There is no necessary break between the texts we recognize as "literary" and those we designate officially as social, historical, political, or legal. The fantasmatic dimension that we acknowledge as inherent to literary production also constitutes a generative force in the creation of public discourses that purport to have erased the traces of unconscious desire. (3)

The ideology of the domestic woman cut across all of these discursive registers and became an instrument for redefining working-class women's work, family, and social relations. But, as Armstrong points out, there was a substantial working-class resistance to middle-class reform efforts. Working-class women had good reason to resist reformation to middle-class virtues. For middle-class women, the domestic space could be a sphere in which they could exercise a particular power. But home meant something very different for working-class women. Working-class residences were notoriously dismal, cramped quarters, overcrowded, and without the conveniences which made middle-class homes havens. They were also another site of labor for working women. Unlike their middle-class counterparts, who relied on hired help to perform the strenuous physical labor required to maintain a household and rear children, working-class women performed this labor themselves. They often also made additional money by taking in laundry, doing needlework, or seeking other such home-based employment as was available, thus making the home a double site of labor. And, being often cut off from extended family relations, the confinement to a

working-class home could also mean isolation for women.[4] As Emma Smith described it, married life was a "lonely existence" (168).

Thus, while working-class women occupied a very different position than their middle-class counterparts, they were nonetheless targets of wide-ranging social and political activity to make them conform to middle-class constructions of femininity. The nineteenth-century "exalted the domestic woman" (Armstrong 5), and this ascendancy configured "a new form of political power" (Armstrong 3). The middle-class woman's power was in the management of her household; "the household had to be governed by a form of power that was essentially female--that is, essentially different from that of the male and yet a positive force in its own right" (19). Following Jacques Donzelot, Armstrong argues that this marks "the transition from a government of families to a government

[4]Jacques Donzelot, in *The Policing of Families*, argues that nineteenth-century French architectural designs for working-class lodgings intentionally sought "a housing unit small enough so that no 'outsider' would be able to live in it" (42). While the French and English situations were not identical, there is a close parallel between them. Certainly the English were as troubled as the French by what both perceived as "the immorality and lack of hygiene of the working-class milieu" (43). Both economies were interested in facilitating the surveillance of disgruntled working-class men by marking the domestic space as private, not social, thus effectively requiring would-be trouble-makers (unhappy workers, union mongers, potential revolutionaries) to congregate in public space. Marking the domestic space as private both increased the amount of work women were required to do in that space (meet new standards of cleanliness, assume full responsibility for cooking, laundering, and child care) and minimized a woman's ability to move outside of the domestic space for her own leisure.

through the family" (Donzelot 92).[5] This power, however, rested upon an ideal of femininity allocating to women the home as their special realm of knowledge and their sole domain. But the home, often figured as a haven with its attending angel, can be decoded so that we recognize it as a theater for the staging of a family's social position, a staging that depends on a group of prescribed domestic practices" (Langland 9). These "prescribed domestic

[5]Elizabeth Langland, in *Nobody's Angels*, offers an important critique of Armstrong's argument. She notes that, while "Armstrong is herself resisting producing what she criticizes in Foucault: 'a story of power [that] often describes what seems to be the inexorable unfolding of order' (282n.22)," her study nevertheless "produces just that narrative" (7). Langland analyzes the power of the middle-class woman's sphere as "a reciprocal process" in which "middle-class women were produced by domestic discourses even as they reproduced them to consolidate middle-class control" (11). The same is true for working-class women. These women were both operated on by the discourses constructing previously accepted modes of working-class life as unnatural and immoral (field labor, premarital sex and pregnancies) and were themselves instrumental in adopting and disseminating these discourses and facilitating the changes in family structure requisite for their changing economic and social order. Individual women's responses to different discourses operating on them varied widely, from internalizing and reproducing those discourses to resisting and subverting them. But they all had to *confront* discourses and practices working to change their gender definitions and prescribe a new set of socially acceptable gender-specific practices. As Armstrong argues, "the representation of the individual as most essentially a sexual subject preceded the economic changes that made it possible to represent English history as the narrative unfolding of capitalism" (13). I want to pursue the relation between the narratives creating new roles for women in changing family structures and state regulation of women's bodies based on the perceived 'naturalness' of these new narratives.

practices"[6] were imbricated in a set of power relations in which middle-class women were key agents in maintaining middle-class dominance. Using Pierre Bourdieu's *Language and Symbolic Power* to analyze the new bourgeois ideal the domestic woman epitomizes, Langland argues:

> Expanding Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital to include the practices of everyday life, we may see that the very rhetoric that insisted on the separation of private from public spheres in Victorian England and depicted Victorian women as disinterested cultural guardians facilitated the operation of this symbolic violence in which the 'structured and structuring instruments of communication and knowledge ... help to ensure that one class dominates another.' (Langland 10)

Many feminist scholars read the nineteenth-century domestic novel as instrumental in constructing and disseminating new ideals of femininity. Armstrong argues that "one cannot distinguish the production of the new female ideal either from the rise of the novel or from the rise of the new middle classes in England" (8). Central to the new female ideal was the discourse of purity. By the mid 1830's, the discourse of sexuality shifted its focus from the aristocracy

[6]For a detailed explanation of this, see the Introduction to *Nobody's Angels*. Langland reads the middle-class woman's domains of knowledge and her field of power as encompassing everything from "increasingly complex rules of etiquette and dress, to the growing formalization of Society and the Season, to the proliferation of household-help manuals, to the institution of household prayer and the custom of house-to-house visiting, to cookery and eating behavior; they even encompass major changes in household architecture. To say that beginning in the 1830's and the 1840's middle-class women controlled significant discursive practices is to argue that they controlled the dissemination of certain knowledges and thus helped to ensure a middle-class hegemony in mid-Victorian England" (9).

to the "the newly organizing working classes," which became the more obvious target of moral reform" (Armstrong 20). Working-class women's sexuality--indeed, any sexually desiring woman--began to be marked as aberrant.[7] Within an ideology marking woman's natural sphere as domestic angel and mother, anything outside of the home or a sexuality whose aim is motherhood becomes *unnatural*. Any woman to whom sexual desire could be attached was *ipso facto* fallen. As the discourses desexualizing "normal" women became more popular, so too did the discourses demonizing sexual women. Women's sexuality was associated with decay, contagion, eruption, disease; "woman" was feared for "the contaminating decomposition of her sexual ferment" (Bernheimer 2).[8]

The domestic woman may well have become a new loci of power in middle class households, but that power was a stage in the political and economic evolution in which we are still engaged, and the plots punishing the desire of fallen women

[7]The popularization of the desexualized middle-class angel has been well researched. Helena Michie, Nina Auerbach, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Amanda Anderson, Nancy Armstrong, and Elizabeth Langland all discuss this in detail. While William Acton's medical discourse claiming that women had no sexual desire hardly monopolized Victorian understandings of women's sexuality, it did feature largely in popular imagination. See also James Kay Shuttleworth's *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working-Classes* and Edwin Chadwick's *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain*.

[8]Charles Bernheimer's study of male fantasies of prostitutes in nineteenth-century France examines the fear of a contaminating, rotting, repulsive female sexuality. See also Nina Auerbach's *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth*.

are one symptom of the instability of that power. What does one do with women who want what the middle class has? Who are not willing to be pacified with the narrative of their place in a cosmic order, not willing to choose bodily deprivation over bodily comfort? What does one do with women who don't *want* to be servants in other people's homes, don't want to labor from youth into an early old age in a sweat shop or a factory while going blind or getting consumption? Working-class women's desire for upward social mobility and personal autonomy is the uncontainable threat the middle-class must narrate over and over again, and narrate in a way that rescripts that desire as responsible for the suffering the fallen woman must inevitably endure. The figure of the fallen woman encompasses women who resisted domestication along middle-class lines, as well as women who lived with men without legal marriage, had illegitimate children, or who made money with sex. The fallen woman was seen either as abnormal (where both sexual desire and living outside the domestic sphere as household manager and mother are seen as unnatural in women), or diseased (where women's sex is contagious, defiling; she spreads venereal disease, her seemingly innocent beauty hosts contaminating impurities). This construction of women's diseased sexuality facilitated the rise of a medical discourse constructing prostitutes as dangerous and making them targets of forced medical procedures. Read in this way, the figure of the fallen woman signifies the confusions and

anxieties surrounding the emerging organization of family and state ongoing in the Victorian period. We thus need to read the narratives of Lock Hospitals and Asylums, the Contagious Diseases Acts, Foundling Hospitals, novels, and working-class women's testimonies for the ways in which working-class women's sexuality was a threat to the emerging order of the state; institutional efforts to contain the threat they posed; and the various methods particular women devised to negotiate this change from the old family regime to the new.

Institutional documents such as Lock Hospital and Asylum records, police and medical reports, Royal Commission Investigations, and Foundling Hospital petitions chart the state's increasing control over working-class women's sexuality and the rise of narratives legitimating state intervention into working-class family life. These records reveal the means by which constructions of fallenness were used to police working-class family structures. Women became the objects of legislation in the state's attempt to control the spread of venereal disease (Walkowitz) as well as the site of the campaign for racial purity. They were penalized for not being good mothers, for not producing proper subjects of the English nation. Motherhood emerged as a corollary to respectability and an impossibility for fallenness. Most essentially, these narratives reveal the state's interest in restructuring the sexual attitudes of rural workers moving to the industrial city. In particular, the working-class's often

casual acceptance of pre-marital pregnancy posed a problem for Victorian reformers. While illegitimate children could be absorbed into a rural agricultural economy, they could not be absorbed into the capitalist industrial economy. Regulating working-class women's sexuality was thus crucial to assimilating the new work force to the demands of the new economy. Donzelot suggests three of the most important means of regulating women's sexuality--convents, foundling hospitals, and organized brothels--were points of "transition between the old family regime and the new" (23).[9] He argues that these institutions both "function[ed] as a surface of absorption for the undesirables of the family order" and as "a strategical base for a whole series of corrective interventions in family life" (25-26). I argue that part of the work these institutions performed was the articulation of an ideology of respectable working-class motherhood which is central to the construction of legitimate subjects. Within this ideology, the production of the fallen woman (the figure of the illegitimate outside of sexual exchange) is necessary

[9]Donzelot argues that the three institutions arose and declined within approximately the same time-span. He dates the use of convents as training grounds in missionary, relief, and educational work for unmarried women as the 17th-century. Simultaneously, there is a consolidation of a state organization for abandoned children and a move to remove prostitution from visibility by creating supervised brothels. All three institutions were in decline by the end of the 19th century. He sees "a single historical curve" which "unified these three types of procedures" (23).

to the production of the "wife" and "mother" (the ground of legitimate sexual exchange).

Issues of legitimacy, motherhood, class, family relations and state form the essential fabric of the Victorian novel:

> The sense in which mothers are responsible to the state and are under its scrutiny, expected to turn out a child schooled in specific ways and cared for as prescribed by medical and associated professionals, was a distinct product of this era, one that is the central issue in the family histories of Foucault and Donzelot. (Ross 5)

Nineteenth-century novels incessantly narrate the fall, suffering, punishment, and death of undomesticable women--women whose sexuality does not conform to the emerging ideal of middle-class femininity. Writing her suffering is in a very real way the punishment of her desire.[10] It is the angry lashing-back at the woman whose desire will not be contained. This writing punishes "bad" women: sexual women, relentlessly fertile women, poor women, undomesticable women. These women were most of all guilty for being excessive, in excess of the economy: their laboring bodies could certainly be absorbed into the economic needs of early capitalist production, but

[10]Anderson notes the "unsettling combination of sympathy and sadism" in *David Copperfield* (95). Similarly, Poovey argues that "In *David Copperfield*, as in the medical texts [she] has already examined, woman is made to bear the burden of sexuality and to be the site of sexual guilt because the problematic aspects of sexuality can be rhetorically (if not actually) mastered when they are externalized and figured in an other" (97). Armstrong argues that "it was as if the production of this new Victorian fiction depended on bringing forth some monstrous woman to punish and then banish from the text, as regularly happened in novels by the Brontes, Gaskell, Dickens, and Thackeray" (165).

their sexual bodies could not be regulated through the economic system into which their labor was conscripted. Thus nineteenth-century representations of fallen women as the excess, the remainder, the outside that cannot be fit into the economy, indicate a change in economic and power relations. Their narrated punishment responds to the very real threat undomesticable working-class women represented to the middle class. This threat was discursively constructed as the threat of contagion--the corruption, contamination, pollution of the wives and daughters of the middle-class; the temptation, seduction, and disease of their sons. But the real threat was to the economic order into which their desires could not be assimilated. This threat was confined and managed by sexualizing working-class women's desire, a move which constructed the fallen woman as aberrant, a sexually depraved animal.

Certainly, then, the figure of the fallen woman is deployed to construct working-class women's patterns of courtship, marriage, and motherhood according to middle-class family structures. Social workers, reformers, charity workers, churches, schools and hospitals carried on this work of inculcation, an inculcation necessary to the restructuring required for an industrial economy. But, in the narration of their suffering, we can read something more about the agency of working-class women and the threat they posed to

middle-class hegemony.[11] Medical and legal narratives of the diseased and contaminating woman flourished alongside the asylum and rescue narratives constructing the victimized fallen woman. But even the seemingly sympathetic narratives of the suffering fallen sister mask a tale of unrelenting punishment. Since Moll Flanders, there have been virtually no texts which represent fallen women without the corresponding narration of their suffering and their punishment. These narratives stand in very stark contrast to some of the stories such women have told.[12] The narrative repetition of the discourse of the fallen woman's suffering functions not only to construct the character of respectable women, but also to imaginatively punish the fallen woman. We

[11]This narrative punishment of the fallen woman is especially important when read against the effects of the Contagious Diseases Acts on prostitutes and other working-class women in garrison towns. The Contagious Diseases Acts drastically affected working-class women's lives. Under the Acts, a special police force walked the streets at night with the specific task of identifying "prostitutes." These men were on the lookout for any new women in town, for women who were seen conversing with prostitutes or inhabiting areas known for prostitution, for women who were with men to whom they could not prove they were married, or for women who were thought to be soliciting men. These police had the right to accost, harass, and arrest any woman at any time. Any woman on the streets at night was subject to interrogation by these police for any reason.

[12]For instance, in her 1825 memoirs Harriet Wilson, a well-known courtesan, unashamedly narrates the pleasures of her life with various upper-class lovers. Similarly, the lowest point of Nell Kimball's life was when she tried to live by needlework. At the brink of starvation, after the death of her child, she went back into business as a prostitute, eventually opening her own brothel, and lived the life of middle-class luxury.

can see in the repetition of these narratives the persistence and strength of working-class women's threat to middle-class constructions of woman, family, and state.[13]

There are several ways in which my interests extend the field of inquiry within which scholars in this field have worked. Anderson, Walkowitz, and Nord examine the category of "prostitute" and the ideologies of gender underlying the construction of women as virtuous or fallen, respectable or corrupt. But these analyses do not engage the specific ways in which the constructions of virtue and fallenness inflect cultural perceptions of motherhood or the function of motherhood in the newly organized economy of the modern state. Ross, Mort, and Donzelot provide an important historical/sociological examination of changes in the social, political, and psychological discourses of the family and motherhood. But they do not address the relationship between emerging discourses of family in official and state documents and representations of fallenness in fictional and autobiographical texts. Anderson, Armstrong, and Langland all deal with narratives of fallenness on several different registers, but all are primarily concerned with constructions

[13]Using Lacan's theorizing of repetition, Judith Butler argues that, where coherent subjectivity is achieved, repetition is superfluous. We thus read in repetitive narratives the incoherence of the subject, "the excluded invariably return[ing] to threaten the subject's implicit claim to be self-sufficient, transparently self-conscious, and self-identical" (12). (In "Lana's 'Imitation': Melodramatic Repetition and the Gender Performative.")

of middle-class subjectivity. Bernheimer details the intensely powerful misogynist fantasies linking women, disease, and decay, but, like Walkowitz and Anderson, he does not elaborate a relationship between these fantasy structures and constructions of motherhood.

All of these analyses articulate an aspect of the complicated nexus of power relations involving representations of fallenness and woman's body as diseased, state regulation of woman's body, and the restructuring of the working-class family in the industrial city. However, none of these analyses brings state institutions' narratives of fallenness, popular fiction, and autobiography together for a detailed analysis of how these texts intersect. I am interested in Victorian constructions of subjectivity across all of these registers. My study uses the important work already done in this field with which to do a close reading of narratives of fallenness and their relationship to constructions of motherhood in the texts of state institutions (Lock Hospitals and Asylums, Royal Commission Reports, Foundling Hospital records), novels, and working-class women's autobiographies. I juxtapose institutional and middle-class representations of fallenness with working-class women's self-representations in order to: 1)expose the differences between middle- and working-class representations; and 2)suggest often unrecognized possibilities for working-class women's agency.

Chapter Two analyzes the texts of the Lock Hospital and Asylum and the Royal Commission Reports investigating the operation of the Contagious Diseases Acts. In these texts we read the ambivalences, anxieties and uncertainties surrounding the classification of fallen women, the nature of the threat these women posed to the state, and the states' measures to contain their threatening sexuality. These texts reveal the extent to which Victorian narratives of fallenness relegate working-class women to the body and deny them access to the Word, the Truth, or to Law.

Chapter Three analyzes narratives of the fall in Foundling Hospital petitions and three popular novels: Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth*, George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, and Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Each of these novels elaborates the narrative of seduction which occurs with formulaic regularity in Foundling Hospital petitions and details the relationship between narratives of the fall and the restructuring of working-class motherhood and family structures. Each of these narratives also clearly articulates the social desire to punish women for having sex outside of sanctioned marriage and relates premarital sex to a fall, decay, decline.

Chapter Four examines Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* for the ways in which discourses of fallenness and family intersect imperialist discourses and England's colonizing ventures. These novels

demonstrate that working-class women cannot prove themselves respectable until they have passed the trial of temptation by an upper-class male seducer. In one sense, the trial is as much about class as sex; to escape the fall the woman must shun upward mobility, must maintain her class, must refuse the benefits of material comfort and bodily ease offered by upper-class lovers. The sexual fall is thus a corollary to the desire for class mobility. To be a legitimate subject, a *good* working-class woman (one who is fit to take her place as the lawful wife of one of her own class, become a good mother to his lawful children) must seem to choose her own material poverty and bodily exploitation. The emigration theme in both novels reveals both an imperial racism and the threat the colonies represented to ideas of English subjectivity. Finally, these narratives of fallenness suggest the importance of domesticated working-class women to middle-class homes, and the parallel threat of *middle-class women's fall*: the ideology of domesticity assigned different *jobs* to domesticated middle- and working-class women, but both were expected to perform the work appropriate to their station.

Chapter Five analyzes several working-class women's personal narratives, among them Mary Saxby's *Memoirs of a Female Vagrant*, Emma Smith's *A Cornish Waif's Story*, and Hannah Cullwick's *Diaries*. The texts span the years 1806 to 1954. While this may at first seem to present a problem for an interpretation of the domesticating function of Victorian

narratives of the fall, my analysis in fact reveals the evolution of these narratives and their effects on working-class women's lives. The earliest text, Saxby's *Memoirs*, occupies the cusp between the Romantic and Victorian periods. As such, Saxby's narrative both reveals vestiges of eighteenth-century working-class sexual mores and foreshadows the nineteenth-century's restructuring of the working-class family. At the opposite extreme, Emma Smith's autobiography details the success this domesticating project had achieved by the end of the Victorian period. Born in the last decades of the nineteenth century, Smith's autobiography was not published until 1954, by which time she was in her late sixties. This narrative reveals both the inculcation of middle-class sexual and familial norms into working-class culture and the similarities between Victorian and contemporary discourses of sex, family, and state. Between these, Cullwick's *Diaries* were written at the heart of the Victorian period and chronicle both the transition from the rural to the urban economies and the changes discourses of domesticity effected in working-class women's lives. All of these texts highlight the effects on working-class women of narratives of fallenness, as well as the surveillance strategies of middle-class households and the potential threat of the legal and medical institutions legitimated by these narratives.

CHAPTER 2
PROSTITUTION, DISEASE, AND THE IMPERIAL STATE

> No one who has realized the amount of moral evil wrought in girls ... whose prurient desires have been increased by Indian hemp and partially gratified by medical manipulations, can deny that remedy is worse than disease. I have ... seen young unmarried women, of the middle-class of society, reduced by the constant use of the speculum, to the mental and moral condition of prostitutes; seeking to give themselves the same indulgence by the practice of solitary vice; and asking every medical practitioner ... to institute an examination of the sexual organs.
>
> Robert Carter *On the Pathology and Treatment of Hysteria*, 1853.

Carter's quote, explicitly linking sexually out-of-control women to the eroticized and equally uncontrollable Indian hemp, raises important questions about the relationship between Victorian ideologies of gender and the Imperial project. Anne McClintock in *Imperial Leather* lucidly explicates this relation:

> Controlling women's sexuality, exalting maternity and breeding a virile race of empire-builders were widely perceived as the paramount means for controlling the health and wealth of the male imperial body politic, so that, by the turn of the

> century, sexual purity emerged as a controlling metaphor for racial, economic and political power. (47)

Similarly, Edward Said argues the "counter-point between overt patterns in British writing about Britain and representations of the world beyond the British Isles" (*Culture and Imperialism* 81). He reads in British writings "before the great age of explicit, programmatic colonial expansion" the colonial assumptions of "native backwardness and general inadequacy to be independent, 'equal,' and fit" (80). He does not, however, draw the parallel between Victorian constructions of women's sexuality and similar constructions of "native" sexuality. Said's argument that the discourses devaluing the colonial subject are carried on "over an undercurrent of sexual exaggeration" is equally applicable to discourses constructing the English working-class, and especially working-class women. Like "the natives," working-class women reproduce themselves, "endlessly, sexually," and that's all they do (*Orientalism* 312). There is thus a strong relation between the Imperialist reduction of the "natives" to sexual bodies and similar discourses reducing women to sexual bodies.

In both discourses, "woman" and "native" are reduced to animal bodies which *reproduce*, as opposed to *produce*. And, in Britain's developing urban industrial economy, *production* is paramount. The British subject (always read as *male*) produces things; the industrial city is constructed as the progressive

light guiding the development of the backward oriental lands and the discourse of science is privileged with a truth value par excellence. British rule is based on the ideal of the "autonomous male subject," a subject with an "authentic, private, [and] self-regulating identity," one "capable of deliberative moral action" (Anderson 2). The British subject, like colonial rule, is premised upon "positive ideas of home, of a nation and its language, of proper order, good behavior, moral values" (Said *Culture* 80-81). McClintock argues that the "trope of the organic family became invaluable in its capacity to give state and imperial intervention the alibi of nature" (45). The image of Britain as the paternal father ruling "benignly over immature children" enabled "what was often murderously violent change to be legitimized as the progressive unfolding of natural decree" (45).

The home, behavior, and values underlying assumptions of British superiority are, of course, those of the Victorian domestic novel. And, of course, the mainstay of any *good* home is a *good* woman. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak defines "feminist individualism in the age of imperialism" as "the making of human beings, the constitution and 'interpellation' of the subject not only as individual but as individualist" ("Three Women's Texts" 799). In this context, the good Victorian woman produces "domestic-society-through-sexual-reproduction cathected as 'companionate love'." While the good woman is busily making child-subjects at home, the

corollary soul-making "imperialist project cathected as civil-society-through-social-mission" is underway abroad (799). But the individualist middle-class woman's complicity in colonialism requires her *virtue*. To be a truly good wife, the Victorian angel, she must also be a virtuous wife: she must not have any sexual drive of her own, but must nevertheless make her body available to her husband to satisfy his sexual desire; she must produce legitimate heirs for her husband; and she must manage the social stage in which he makes business connections, plans, deals.

"In a reciprocal process, then, middle-class women were produced by domestic discourses even as they reproduced them to consolidate middle-class control" (Langland 11). The idealized English home and family "[serves as] the motive and reward of the Empire-builder" (Bratton 78). The discourse of "proper order, good behavior, and moral values" was a domestic production that, to the extent that it funds Empire-building, functions also as a cultural export.[14] Ann McClintock sees the mission station as one example of this cultural exportation, where the "mission station became a threshold institution for transforming domesticity rooted in European

[14]Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, in *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, discusses imperialist impositions of culture--language, religion, economic and moral paradigms--as a "cultural bomb." He sees this cultural bomb as annihilating "a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves" (3).

gender and class roles into domesticity as controlling a colonized people" (35). If, however, a woman does *not* perform her proper work within her proper sphere, she is *not* a good woman. And we see clearly the link between the *bad* woman and the colonized. Like the colonized, the bad woman (the sexual woman, the promiscuous woman, *the fallen woman*) is perceived as a threat to proper order, to the middle-class family, and thus to the state.

It is no accident, then, that Robert Carter's analysis of uncontrollable female sexuality links the sexually out-of-control woman to the use of Indian hemp. Sexual women, like the oriental other, represent the threat of the irrational animal body, the body that must be controllable, governable, containable, and, most importantly, usable.[15] Within this ideology, sexual middle-class women are *mad* (as in Carter's analysis of the hysteric) and sexual working-class women are bad. Carter's fear is that the speculum functions as a substitute penis, a sexual device which increases "prurient

[15]There are several registers at which the sexual working-class female body's use-value can be interrupted. First, since her employer requires almost exclusive use of her body's labor capacity, her child-bearing immediately interrupts her body's labor-value to her employer during her period of confinement, and the physical and time demands of child-care pose a long-term interruption to her labor value. If the sexual working-class woman refuses to be governed and controlled through domestication, she has no home-making value. And, while it can be argued that the efforts to organize prostitution within state-regulated brothels accede a use-value to the purchasable woman, this value is contingent upon her willingness to be kept out of sight, contained within very narrow state-defined boundaries. If she refuses such containment, her sex has no value to the state.

desires" in middle-class women and thus reduces them to the "mental and moral condition of prostitutes." Women treated with the speculum are, in fact, fallen; they are not pure. An indication of their fallenness is the sexual desire Carter believes the speculum exam elicits--they might try to "give themselves the same indulgence by the practice of solitary vice," or they might wander from doctor to doctor, "asking every medical practitioner ... to institute an exam of the sexual organs."

Carter's insinuation that the speculum exam elicits an uncontainable sexual desire conflates sexual middle-class women with prostitutes and barely conceals the threat to sexually desiring middle-class women of losing the privilege of their class status. And, to lose the privilege of class was, literally, to lose legal rights. By the time of Carter's writing, moves were already under way to strip prostitutes of legitimate subject status; the passage of the Contagious Diseases Acts quite literally gave ownership of women's bodies to the medical and legal institutions. By the mid-1800's, there is a collapse of medical and legal discourses in which doctors and magistrates share the power to define and incarcerate prostitutes. This collapse resulted in part from a shared civil and military concern with the medical treatment of venereal disease and the consequent collaboration of military and medical institutions. As Elaine Scarry defines

it, "medicine and law, health and justice"[16] are the institutional elaborations of body and state (Scarry 42). It is this institutional elaboration of the diseased female body and the state's right to control and regulate that body for which I read the London Lock Hospital and Asylum records.

The London Lock Hospital and Asylum

When the London Lock Hospital was first established in 1746 it treated men, women, and children diagnosed with venereal disease primarily on an out-patient basis. The hospital's early records indicate neither a preoccupation with diseased *women* nor a strong drive towards incarcerating women for treatment. There were wards for in-patient treatment of the more serious cases, and there were efforts to keep men's and women's beds separated. But there was no institutional discourse constructing women as more dangerous than men to the community or more in need of incarceration. Segregation efforts focused on keeping men and women in the wards apart and, occasionally, on keeping unmarried or "low" women separated from the married women. The July 23, 1747 minutes

[16]The opponents of the Contagious Diseases Acts rally under the cry for justice; for eradicating the *injustice* of the Acts, of the sexual double standard, of state-sanctioned vice. But the vehicle of *justice* is, of course, the institution of the *law*, so that what is in dispute here is not the functional apparatus of the state so much as the means by which and the authority upon which that apparatus will be deployed.

of the hospital court record a note that no men are to be admitted to the women's ward. But the hospital seems, at first anyway, to have been primarily concerned with a medical treatment of the disease, not a moral reformation of the diseased. Though the hospital did employ a chaplain, the July 4, 1748 minutes record that he was dismissed for non-attendance. Moreover, the Hospital Court meetings did not draw a large audience; the 1748 notes express displeasure at the number of governors not attending meetings and a resolve to expel those members habitually absent from meetings.

In the decade from 1746-1756 the Lock Hospital grew from a small organization fighting problems of non-attending chaplains and absentee governors to an institution with a bureaucracy. The first auditing of accounts is recorded March 12, 1750, the first real abstract of accounts March 10, 1752. Patient accounts were also recorded in the 1752 meetings. After 1752, the administrative accounts become more detailed, with a regular financial accounting appearing separately from an accounting of patients treated. By March 24, 1753 the court session minutes record an attendance of 40 (up from eight to ten in its first years), and the minutes move from being business notes to being self-conscious reflections of the hospital's past and its role in the future. In short, the Lock Hospital takes on the dimensions of an institution. The March 1753 minutes record that the hospital has "been able to support, maintain, and cure upwards of 1,800 patients within

the space of six years" and that the hospital is "out of debt on account of building the wall to enclose the ground, furniture, etc. and are of opinion [sic] for the future that the annual income will be capable of maintaining many more patients provided the building is enlarged agreeable to the original plan."

The Court Sessions minutes record the institutionalization of the London Lock Hospital. The Hospital becomes "a domain in which truth teaches itself, and, in exactly the same way, offers itself to the gaze of both the experienced observer and the naive apprentice; for both, there is only one language: the hospital, in which the series of patients examined is itself a school" (Foucault *Birth of the Clinic* 68). The expanded recording and codification of the Lock hospital patient and financial accounts records both the growing business of the hospital (it treats more patients, the buildings are expanded) and the growing importance attached to the observations the hospital business generates. The hospital generates a medical discourse, a discourse evolving from doctors' observations of groups of people gathered together with the same disease and the ease with which information about the disease can be gathered and shared. We thus see in the early records of the Lock Hospital the beginnings of the narratives of diseased women as creatures of a different nature than diseased men. The records move from making little distinction between diseased women and men, to

defining and treating diseased women much differently than diseased men.

The Hospital and Asylum records chart the emerging discourses constructing women as the agents of contagion and the objects for containment. While the preamble to the 1753 subscription roll for enlarging the hospital *does* mark married women and children as particularly pitiful sufferers of venereal disease, it does *not* construct women as the principal objects through which to study or control the spread of venereal disease. If anything, the text implies that diseased *men* represent the greatest threat to the community, especially in its focus on *children* who have been infected by adults:

> Whereas it appears by report of the committee appointed to audit the Treasurer's Accounts for the year last past, that upwards of 1800 patients have been cured in this hospital since the first reception of patients from January 31st 1746 to March 10 1753. Amongst which were great numbers of married women injured by bad husbands, others were infected by suckling distempered children, children born with the disease, others imbibed it from their nurses, but upwards of sixty children from two to ten years old have suffered by ways little suspected by the generality of mankind, visit[ed] by adults in hopes to get rid of the disease, by infecting of sound persons even these little innocents, it appeared likewise that great numbers of these miserable distressed objects were frequently refused admission into the hospital for want of room and most likely many of them perished for want of timely relief.[17]

While gender was a minimal factor in the early records of the London Lock Hospital, by the mid-1800's the governors

[17]It was a commonly held belief that persons infected with a venereal disease could cure themselves by having sex with an uninfected child.

appeal for increased building space becomes highly gendered. Women are now marked, not only as special objects through which to study venereal disease, but as specific embodiments of disease. Indeed, the history of the London Lock Hospital mirrors the history of the clinic Foucault outlines. Foucault notes that in the eighteenth century the clinic becomes "a way of learning and *seeing*" (*Birth of the Clinic* 64), and that "the formation of the clinical method was bound up with the emergence of the doctor's gaze into the field of signs and symptoms" (91). The eighteenth-century clinic effaces the seventeenth-century distinction between signs and symptoms, privileging the doctor's reading of the signifiers of disease (sign *and* symptom) for what is *signified*--the essence of the disease (91). The doctor's reading of the signifiers of disease becomes the medical *history*. "In clinical medicine, *to be seen* and *to be spoken* immediately communicate in the manifest truth of the disease of which it is precisely the whole *being*. There is disease only in the element of the visible and therefore statable" (95). Similarly, the eighteenth-century clinical experience and practice of the London Lock Hospital resulted in the tendency to see *female sexuality* as the *sign* of disease. By the time of the 1854 annual report, the governor's plans to expand the hospital embody a specific desire to incarcerate and contain the spread of disease through infected women. A larger hospital would:

> Place at the disposal of the governors many more wings and wards, and so enable them to greatly

> increase the number of *female* (italics mine) patients as well as to improve the classification of them. The necessity of a proper classification of the patients presses itself strongly on the minds of the governors; for it will be recollected that it is not the profligate only, the degraded, or the immoral, that seek refuge and are received into this institution, but often the most urgent as well as the most pitiable objects of its care are those who are free from criminality--married women and helpless children being frequently found in its wards, and at present the governors are not able to make any or at least very little distinction. They feel that this state of things ought not any longer to exist; and they therefore regard with much pleasure the near prospect of being able to appropriate separate rooms for such superior cases.

The superior cases (virtuous married women) must be separated from possible moral contagion by the inferior cases (unmarried women, fallen women). The 1857 annual report laments that:

> The Hospital, in its present state, does not permit of any proper classification of the patients. The married woman of unblemished reputation is of necessity placed in the same ward with those whose past life bears the deep stain of infamy and immorality. It is, therefore, highly desirable that, as soon as may be, adequate provision should be made for a complete classification of the patients by an extension of the Hospital. Such a separation as will remove the virtuous from the society of the immoral, and will preserve the young and less hardened from the evil influence and artifices of the more corrupt, is a matter of the highest importance, and demands, not only the earnest attention of your Board, but also the generous sympathy and support of the public.

Here we must note that the Lock Hospital patients were primarily working-class women. Middle-class patients still received their medical care in their homes by their attending physicians. This fear of virtuous women being corrupted by the pernicious influences of diseased women is an important counter-strain to the Victorian belief that respectable upper

and middle-class women were the most appropriate ministers to the needs of the fallen. This belief held that the innate virtue of the angel-in-the-house protected her from the contaminating influence of the sexual woman. This is not so much of a paradox as it might first appear. Clearly, it is the *middle-class* woman who is impervious to corruption, and it is her *class* position that guarantees her virtue. The virtuous working-class woman is good by virtue of not having yet fallen, though her "fall" is the always-present possibility upon which her virtue is established. A working-class woman's virtue could be called into question if she transgressed the bourgeois code of sexual conduct or if she resisted the industrial/capitalist demand on her labor. On the first register, premarital sexual relations, common-law unions, serial monogamy, illegitimate children, and cross-class sexual relations mark a woman as fallen; on the second, the desire for vertical social mobility, including expensive clothes and fashion accessories, lodgings, furniture, good and plentiful food, money, servants, horses, carriages, and the like constitute fallenness. In short, working-class women's fall exists as both the fall into sexuality and the transgression of class boundaries.

While the 1857 annual report laments the hospital's inability to protect (through segregation) virtuous working-class women from the pernicious effects of association with fallen women, it also acknowledges that "four-fifths of the

patients have had at least an elementary education" and thus they "cannot [charge] their fall to ignorance solely. The education of the masses is rather deficient in kind than in extent. It is a training of the mind, not of the heart." In other words, fallen women need the proper religio-social indoctrination. This belief in the need to reform, reclaim, and properly train fallen women becomes a central organizing trope of the Lock Hospital/Asylum Institution. The reformatory was established in July of 1787. The Centenary Report for the London Lock Hospital Asylum declares the Asylum's mission that of checking "the progress of this enormous evil [of prostitution]." Prostitutes are the "miserable ... unhappy women who disgrace our streets, and subsist upon the wages of iniquity. ... They throng our streets, lie in wait for the incautious, and corrupt the rising generation; evil habits are early contracted, ruinous connexions formed, conscience and the sense of shame subdued, and our youths trained up to profligacy. ... We may, without exaggeration, assert, that a common prostitute is an evil in the community not dissimilar to that of a person infected with the plague; who, miserable herself, is daily communicating the contagion to others, that will propagate still wider the fatal malady."[18]

[18]Apparently, middle-class men do not share middle-class women's imperviousness to the contaminating influences of the sexual woman. Newspapers, religious and social tracts, medical and scientific journals of the period, were full of the fear of the sons of the middle-class being corrupted by

Imperialism, Class, Gender and Disease

There are two levels at which this rhetoric works. The first links prostitutes with the fears of contagion, particularly from the lower classes. The second links the fear of venereal disease and the fallen woman to threats of foreign invasion, including the effects of war and a fear of reverse colonization. The rhetoric linking venereal disease to the plague is rooted in the cholera epidemics of the nineteenth century, particularly the 1830's epidemics and the sanitary measures to improve hygiene that grew out of the fear

fallen women--made immoral, given disease, ruined by lust. Curiously, stories in which middle-class men corrupt (seduce, morally or physically "contaminate") working-class women are notably *absent*. Popular narratives in which helpless domestic servants are seduced by their employers and employers' sons generally feature *upper*, not *middle*-class homes and seducers. This is particularly significant given that it is precisely the rise of the middle-class that made domestic service the number one employment for women "throughout the nineteenth century and until the First World War" (Burnett 136). That these narratives still feature the *aristocracy* as the villainous seducers seems to correlate with Nancy Armstrong's argument that early middle-class discourses wresting power from the aristocracy leveled "charges of violence and corruption against the old aristocracy" (18). While several religious and philanthropical groups (including the Ladies' National Association) did charge middle-class men with corrupting innocent working-class girls, this did not become a popular *story*. This slippage suggests that the seducing rake story marks an anxiety about culpability--just who does corrupt whom? Statistically, the middle-class employed the preponderance of domestic servants, suggesting that middle-, not upper-class men, would be the logical "seducers." The seducing rake story thus marks an anxiety of culpability while paradoxically allowing middle-class men to avoid responsibility for the sexual exploitation of their servants and maintaining middle-class men as victims of the sexually contaminating fallen woman. This narrative gap, then, allows the sexualized working-class woman to remain a more or less uncontested threat to middle-class subjectivity.

of contamination and the spread of disease by unsanitary conditions. The lower classes were seen as threatening cesspools of disease and contagion. Inflammatory rhetoric about "the ingression of a disease, which threatens, with a stealthy step, to invade the sanctity of the domestic circle" prompted, "in anticipation of the invasion of cholera, the inspections of the streets and houses of large towns" (Shuttleworth 11). According to James Kay Shuttleworth, and important figure in Victorian social and sanitary reform efforts, "the dense masses of the habitations of the poor," in which "the incurable ills of society rankled, beyond the reach of sanative interference," could be "unconsciously conveyed from those haunts of beggary where it is rife, into the most still and secluded retreat of refinement" (11-12). The discourse of the Lock Hospital and Asylum collapses the boundary between prostitution and poverty; it constructs women as infectious and conflates venereal infection with the plague. "The prostitute" becomes, literally, "an evil" similar to the plague who communicates her misery to the unsuspecting and incautious.

What's more, the diseased prostitute is linked to the foreign other. The prostitute "corrupts the rising generation," debilitating the English race. This discourse invokes the fear of the unchecked prostitute "propogat[ing] still wider the fatal malady," rhetorically tying the prostitute to racial Armageddon. The 1858 annual report notes

that the "Indian mutiny" caused financial hardship to the institution. The same report makes an urgent case for a separate male hospital and for expanded space to allow the separation of superior (married and therefore innocent) victims from inferior (unmarried and therefore fallen) corrupters. This link between the need to contain the colonized Indians and the need to categorize (and thus contain the contaminating threat of) fallen women suggests a relationship between British military campaigns abroad and state controls of women's sexuality at home. Both are sustained by the fear of racial degeneration. The report goes on to say that "it is evident that if allowed to spread uncontrolled, this disease leads to the physical as well as the moral deterioration of our race: if not checked, its fatal effects are transmitted to successive generations, and are evinced in the depopulation of a country, or in the want of physical energy of its inhabitants." We read further in this report an even more amplified fear of the English race weakened by the encroaching other--the diseased prostitute, the urban poor, the colonized:

> Should the time ever arise when, from the continued absence of sanitary regulations, the enervating and unopposed results of this malady, transmitted through successive periods, shall become as widely diffused in this as in some other countries, we may no longer be able to boast of our national energy or character, or our power of physical endurance.

Here, the results of venereal disease threaten to make England like "some other countries," i.e., the corrupted and diseased

colonies. Disease threatens the *national character and physical body of England itself*. Similarly, the 1860 report says: "The time is long past when society could afford to blind itself to the social evils, more destructive than open war, which sap its strength and undermine its very existence." This rhetoric conflates disease, death, decay, and decline with war, foreign enemies and invasion. It constructs contamination and invasion as imminent dangers, and strategically deploys this inflammatory discourse to enact legislation uniting the medical and police institutions in a network of surveillance and control over working-class women.

Thus the prostitute becomes the symbol of the need for state control and regulation, both at the domestic level (the working-classes must be sanitized, disease must be contained) and at the national level (she is linked to the backward native, threatens the potency of the English race). The rhetoric likens working-class slums to the uncivilized colonies and makes it the business of the capitalist state to impose order and good government on the disorderly and mismanaged poor. According to Shuttleworth's 1832 study *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes*, "moral and physical degradation are inseparable from barbarism" (78). It is "the cultivation of the faculties, the extension of knowledge, the improvement of the arts" that "enable man to extend his dominion over matter" (79). There is a "natural progress of barbarous habits" in which "want of cleanliness,

of forethought, and economy, are found in almost invariable alliance with dissipation, reckless habits, and disease" (81). Thus the working class, as the dirty, uncivilized barbarians, must be managed, regulated, schooled, taught, governed, by the civilized middle class. This rhetoric moralized poverty, always seeing poverty as a sign of moral degeneracy and intellectual inferiority. Thus, when Shuttleworth, whose tract is full of the praises of capitalism, describes the abominable living conditions of the poor in Parliament Street, Manchester, he makes these conditions *their* fault:

> There is only one privy for three hundred and eighty inhabitants, which is placed in a narrow passage, whence its effluvia infest the adjacent houses, and must prove a most fertile source of disease. In this street also, cesspools with open grids have been made close to the doors of the houses, in which disgusting refuse accumulates, and whence its noxious effluvia constantly exhale. (36).

This picture of the stagnant *miasma*--the noxious effluvia of the overflowing privy and open cesspools--is linked to a *moral* miasma, and the prostitute becomes the symbol par excellence of contagion. As David Trotter explains in *Circulation: Defoe, Dickens, and the Economies of the Novel*, "the prostitute becomes the cesspool, the point in the system where refuse accumulates and disease flourishes. Like a drain, her body must be cleared regularly, and not left to fester. The metaphor identifies her, but not her clients; she alone, therefore, bears the responsibility for syphilis" (75).

Despite the horror with which working-class living conditions are described and the fear in which they are held, Shuttleworth still maintains that "the unsheltered, naked savage, starving on food common to the denizens of the wilderness, never knew the comforts contained in the most wretched cabin of our poor" (78). According to Shuttleworth, it is not the conditions of an industrial capitalist state that create the horror of the living conditions he describes, but the moral and intellectual deficiency of the working classes who have not properly reaped the civilizing rewards of capitalism. In fact, civilization itself demands the spread of capitalism and domestic economy:

> When, therefore, every zone has contributed its most precious stores--science has revealed her secret laws--genius has applied the mightiest powers of nature to familiar use, making matter the patient and silent slave of the will of man--if want prey upon the heart of the people, we may strongly presume that, besides the effects of existing manners, some accidental barrier exists, arresting their natural and rightful supply. (79)

Thus, "the evils affecting the working classes, *so far from being the necessary results of the commercial system, furnish evidence of a disease which impairs its energies, if it does not threaten its vitality*" [italics in original] (79). There is a fear that the "other" is a disease inside of Britain itself, and that the unordered contaminating other threatens to burst the boundaries containing it and spill into the orderly halls of industrial capitalist British government. This other could be the laborer challenging industrialization,

an undomesticated female sexuality, or the colonized rebelling. The prostitute, as the uncontainable body, is the untechnologized other, the one who needs the rational scientific governance of men/law/Britain and industry. She stands as the emblem of mismanagement, squalor, filth and disease, all of the things antithetical to proper order and economic prosperity. The "most pressing necessities of the poor" can be relieved only by "first ... a well-regulated charity, and secondarily, by instruction in domestic economy--exhortations to industry--admonition concerning the consequences of vice, and by obtaining work for the deserving and unemployed" (Shuttleworth 66). Thus the eradication of poverty and vice hinges upon *women's domestic virtues*.

Restructuring the Working-Class Family

Donzelot argues that the new family structure of the modern state required the middle-class's active construction of a feminine ideal for the working-class:

> Woman, the housewife and attentive mother, was man's salvation, the privileged instrument for civilizing the working class. It sufficed merely to shape her to this use, to furnish her with the necessary instruction, to instill in her the elements of a tactics of devotion, in order for her to stamp out the spirit of independence in the working man. (Donzelot 36)

And, in fact, Shuttleworth laments that "the early age at which girls are admitted into the factories, prevents their acquiring much knowledge of domestic economy; and even supposing them to have had accidental opportunities of making

this acquisition, the extent to which women are employed in the mills, does not, even after marriage, permit the general application of its principles" (69).

Those "most pressing necessities of the poor," then, can be taken care of by the domestic labors of a good woman, while poverty and vice will perpetuate themselves as long as working-class women are wayward. And, more specifically, the working-class woman must be a good *mother*. The working-class woman whose wage-labor prohibits her from nursing her own children does the most grievous harm, as her children are then given to wet-nurses, "abandoned to one whose sympathies are not interested in its welfare." Children so "abandoned" are "ill-fed, dirty, ill-clothed, exposed to cold and neglect; and in consequence, more than one-half of the offspring of the poor (as may be proved by the bills of mortality of the town) die before they have completed their fifth year" (70). Interestingly, Shuttleworth overlooks the economic necessity that forces women to place their children with wet-nurses: neither they nor their children can survive unless they work, but, in order to work, somebody else must assume child-care responsibilities. He sees little relation between inadequate wages, poor living conditions, and poverty. He sees poverty as its own disease, the result of vice and immoral behavior. To correct the causes of poverty, Shuttleworth proposes institutionalized schooling. In the schools:

> All the children of the poor are rescued from ignorance, and from the effects of that bad

> example, to which they are now subjected in the crowded lanes of our cities.
>
> With a general system of education, we hope will also be introduced institutions, in which the young females of the poor may be instructed in Domestic Economy, and where those pernicious traditional prejudices, which, combined with neglect, occasion the great mortality of their children, may be removed, and they may receive wholesome advice concerning their duties as wives and mothers. (71-72)

The Contagious Diseases Acts and Woman's Animal Body

Thus the fallen woman becomes a symbolically charged site, associated with the dirt of the lower classes, epidemic disease and contamination, and the decline of the English race--responsible for this decline both by spreading disease and contagion and by bearing weakened offspring, "one-half of whom die before they reach the age of five years" (Shuttleworth 11). This is the context out of which the Contagious Diseases Acts grew. Judith Walkowitz, the definitive source for historical study of the Contagious Diseases Acts, summarizes them:

> The Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866, and 1869 were introduced as exceptional legislation to control the spread of venereal disease among enlisted men in garrison towns and ports. By 1869, they were in operation in eighteen "subjected districts." Under the acts, a woman could be identified as a "common prostitute" by a special plainclothes policeman and then subjected to a fortnightly internal examination. If found suffering from gonorrhea or syphilis, she would be interned in a certified lock hospital (a hospital containing venereal wards) for a period not to exceed nine months. The definition of common prostitute was vague, and consequently the metropolitan police employed under the acts had broad discretionary powers. When accosted by the

> police, a woman was expected to submit voluntarily to the medical and police registration system or else be brought before the local magistrates. If brought to trial for refusing to comply, the woman bore the burden of proving that she was virtuous--that she did not go with men, whether for money or not. (Walkowitz 2)

A repeal movement, fueled in large part by the Ladies' National Association, eventually resulted in a series of Royal Commission investigations into the operations of the Acts. The narrative of these investigations reveals the extent to which the category of "prostitute" is a construction used to police the working classes. It is precisely the issue of the visibility of the prostitute body that organizes both the enactment of and the opposition to the Contagious Diseases Acts. The visibility of the prostitute body, the *public* body, is read as an offense to the domestic woman's body, the *private* body. Moreover, the metonymic substitution of disease for the prostitute/public body becomes the *raison d'etre* for both the legal-medical purging/cure/removal and the religious reform/purification/cleansing of that body. The same logic organizing the enactment of the CDA's also organized the opposition to them. The drive to "reclaim" the prostitute, to "restore" her, rests on the denial of the materiality of the body: the "virtuous" woman is the pure woman, the woman not fallen into her sex, her body, and the "fallen" woman *is* her sex, her body. The fallacy of this logic assumes a "self" that is not "body," and the visibility of the prostitute body

is as much a threat to opponents' self-construction as it is for the proponents'.

The Word, the Law, and the Truth

Within this construction, the sexualized woman is the animal body with no access to the word, the law, or legitimate subject status. Truth (a product of the knowing word and determined by the system of law) is not something the prostitute can *tell*; her only truth is in her body, but that truth must be read by the legitimate subject with access to language and law. Walkowitz notes that "the failure to provide a statutory definition of the common prostitute is consistent with the traditional legal treatment in Britain of women and outcast groups--as the "other," an entirely negative and collective presence before the law" (Walkowitz 87). And, as Page duBois argues in *Torture and Truth*, "the logic of our philosophical tradition, of some or our inherited beliefs about truth, leads almost inevitably to conceiving of the body of the other as the site from which truth can be produced, and to using violence if necessary to extract that truth" (6).[19]

[19]duBois' elaborates the argument that "the very idea of truth we receive from the Greeks, those ancestors whom Allan Bloom names for us, is inextricably linked with the practice of torture, which has almost always been the ultimate attempt to discover a secret 'always out of reach'" (7). She argues that "since we are descended from this noble ancient culture, from the inventors of philosophy and democracy, we see ourselves as privileged, as nobly obliged to guide the whole benighted world toward Western culture's version of democracy and enlightenment" (4). duBois problematizes the West's self-privileging, calling for an understanding that "there is more

Thus, what is really at stake in the investigations is a validation of the law, an affirmation of the rational premises of that law, and a reassertion of the "truth" of the good master/ruler upon which that law is founded. While the investigation is overburdened with police reports of the surveillance and arrest of prostitutes, medical returns of their gynecological exams, and renditions of their "stories," not one woman labeled and "disciplined" as a "prostitute" represents herself in the inquiry. They are the silent outsiders to whom the legitimate speech of the institution is not accessible, and the stories represented are not the

at stake in our recognition of this history than antiquarianism, than complacency about our advances from barbarism to civilization. That truth is unitary, that truth may finally be extracted by torture, is part of our legacy from the Greeks and, therefore, part of our idea of 'truth'" (4-5). She examines the structure of truth in Greek law, understandings of slavery and freedom, torture, and writing. I draw a parallel between the slave body and the prostitute body. While this is not an exact correlation, I believe duBois' argument points to important aspects of Victorian constructions of "prostitute": that prostitutes cannot tell the truth; that their bodies must tell the truth of their vice, of their disease, and their threat; that the medical and legal institutions must extract truth from the prostitute; that the truth extracted alleviates anxieties about the possibility of, as Anderson terms it, "attenuated autonomy and fractured identity" (2). Thus, where duBois argues that the "desire to uncover the truth of the difference between slavery and freedom constitutes part of the discourse on torture in the ancient world" (47), I would argue that debates over state practices regulating prostitution mark a cultural anxiety about subjectivity in the modern world. Whereas duBois sees that "the slave's truth is the master's truth; it is in the body of the slave that the master's truth lies, and it is in torture that his truth is revealed" (66), I argue that constructions of prostitute tell a part of the truth about the rise of the modern state: legitimacy is defined against the prostitute body, and it is by controlling the prostitute body that legitimate subject status is secured.

women's but a rendition that serves the purposes of the parties to this performance. Within this dramatization of the issues surrounding the Contagious Diseases Acts, the only voices representing themselves are, in fact, "legitimate" voices. Both poles of the discourse participate in what Pierre Bourdieu calls the "monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence" (239). All parties involved in this discursive production of "truth" are already legitimate speakers in that they already have access to the institutions of language and law, and this access grounds them as intrinsically dominating to those about whom and on whose behalf they pronounce. As Bourdieu says:

> The use of language, the manner as much as the substance of discourse, depends on the social position of the speaker, which governs the access he can have to the language of the institution, that is, to the official, orthodox and legitimate speech. It is the access to the legitimate instruments of expression, and therefore the participation in the authority of the institution, which makes *all* the difference. (109)

In this sense, then, all the speakers involved in this drama possess a linguistic competence which is a "statutory capacity" (Bourdieu 69). The statutory capacity of the legitimate speaker makes his speech performative in that it claims (and effectively claims to the extent that he is a recognized agent of the state) to hold over dominated individuals the "*potential jurisdiction* of formal law" (Bourdieu 71).

The truth produced is, while different in specific ways, fundamentally the same truth for both the recognized agents of the state (police, medical and legal institutions) and those claiming to oppose the recognized agents of the state (LNA, church groups, repeal and reform activists). Both produce themselves as legitimate rulers-masters, those who know what to *do* with the "prostitutes," how to solve the *problem* of "prostitution." All parties to the investigation share the state's language, uncritically constructing "prostitute" as a category and "the prostitute" as an object for intervention. They share the language of disease, the construction of "prostitute" as a category authorizing intervention into working-class women's lives (whether medical, legal, moral, or religious), and the consensus that something must be *done* with these women. This construction *is* a symbolic imposition of official naming, and as such, both the opponents and the proponents of the Acts are members of the same linguistic community and share the "monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence."

The drama of the investigation involves a performance in which the official language of the state (legal, medical, class) reauthorizes itself. This reauthorization is a production that begins with the legitimacy of the language (the Contagious Diseases Acts) being called into question. This performance succeeds to the extent that the institutions of the state--the court and the hospital--are "capable of

imposing universal recognition of the dominant language." This type of linguistic community "is the condition for the establishment of relations of linguistic domination" (Bourdieu 45-46). Judging from the results of the 1871 Royal Commission Investigation, the performance did succeed in "imposing universal recognition of the dominant language." The Committee was satisfied that "the police are not chargeable with any abuse of their authority, and that they have hitherto discharged a novel and difficult duty with moderation and caution" (7). The primary truth produced in these investigations, then, (*reproduced* in the testimony of the bulk of the "witnesses" and the *product* of the investigation) is the "truth" of working-class woman's diseased sex, the "truth" of the prostitute. While there is some dispute among the contestants as to whom and under what circumstances women should be defined as "prostitute," as to what constitutes valid *evidence*, as to the agents who should be *authorized* to dispose of the women, and as to the proper *disposition* of the women, there is *no* dispute about the category itself. Both the proponents and the opponents of the Acts participate in an "*official naming*, a symbolic act of imposition which has on its side all the strength of the collective, of the consensus, of common sense, because it is performed by a delegated agent of the state, that is, the holder of the *monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence*" (Bourdieu 239).

Nevertheless, the most obvious and the most readily recognizable as official agents of the state and official speakers are the doctors and the police. No matter what challenges are presented to the "evidence" or "testimony" of these "officials," the investigating commission clearly positions itself as aligned with the *word* of these agents. For example, in the cross-examination of Police Constable S.R. Anniss by Committee Chair William Nathaniel Massey, Massey says to Anniss:

> Now I must ask you a question which the respectability of your character and the manner in which you have given your evidence makes it very disagreeable to me to put, but it is my duty to do so, because a statement has been made that you and your officers have conducted yourselves with indecency and have used foul language in discharging your duty towards these unfortunate women. Now I must ask you whether this statement is true. (310)[20]

Anniss categorically denies the accusations, and his *word* is indisputable evidence for the commission. Moreover, the police are represented as having a special knowledge, a knowledge to which those accusing the police of wrong-doing have no access. Accusations against the police are

[20]Anniss is responding to the accusation that the metropolitan police conducted night arrests of women they suspected of prostitution. At these arrests, the police are accused of entering the bedrooms, trying to catch women in bed, of forcibly pulling the bed covers from the women, sexually harassing the women, and being verbally and physically violent with the women. An interesting addendum to this accusation is the statistic, cited by Francis Finnegan in Poverty and Prostitution, that police represented one-sixth of the prostitutes' business in York. (122)

represented as *ignorant*, statements which lack *knowledge* or *evidence*, and are therefore unsubstantiable. As Anniss explains the accusations of police abuse, the accusers are, first, "led away by the stories of these poor fallen women" (312) and, secondly, "unacquainted with police regulations" (312). Such people "know nothing about the subtlety of these poor creatures, and [are] therefore led away by them, and it is something dreadful to repeat their statements in the way it has been done, and thereby mislead the credulous" (312). The prostitutes, of course, are configured as only capable of lying. Anniss says over and over again, "what these women say cannot and must not be taken into account ... I would not speak after or move on anything a prostitute would say ... we could not rely or act on what prostitutes say" (22). Like the slave in duBois' analysis of the Athenian court, the prostitute cannot reveal a truth through the word, only through her body.

Even those supposedly advocating on behalf of the prostitutes as a rule reject the authority of the prostitute's word (with the notable exception of Josephine Butler). For example, the Reverend Lowry says that "I have heard the stories by which some have been induced to become prostitutes, but I have never sought much on that point, because I have never thought it very trustworthy." Furthermore, he says that he "could not rely on" their self-representations (324). Even when their stories are accepted, the prostitute's word must be

tested for its truth. Unlike the word of the police or the doctor, the truth of which is self-evident, the word of the prostitute is always under suspicion. "Do you believe all these girls tell you?" " Do you think you can rely on what these girls tell you?" are common questions put to those who position themselves as representing the women brought under the Acts. Even when Rev. A. Lowry objected to an incident in which the police's refused to believe a woman who claimed to have been wrongly accused of and detained for prostitution, his objection was on the grounds that the woman's word was not sufficiently *tested*. He thinks it disgraceful that the police did not attempt to prove or disprove the validity of her story. It was "a most disgraceful thing that policeman before he had finished examining the girl told her, 'I do not believe a word that you say.' How had he any opportunity of testing whether what she said was true or false when he said he did not believe her statement" (325). Clearly, the problem is *NOT* that the woman in question is suspected of lying--Lowry, too, suspects "prostitutes" of lying. Neither party accepts the women's word as sufficient or, as with the word of the police, as proof in itself.

In this configuration of the prostitute, then, she has no access to the word, to truth, or the law. She is reduced to an animal body, incapable of speaking a truth, always dangerous and a threat to the moral order and physical integrity of the English nation. Mr. W. H. Sloggett,

physician to the London Lock Hospital, testifies before the commission that "every woman being a prostitute may be suspected of being diseased at any moment" (141). What's more, this disease may escape detection, be festering and infecting innocent men without their knowing it. As M.M. Moore, surgeon to the London Lock Hospital in 1862, says:

> I believe cases of syphilis may escape for a week or so, or perhaps more. A woman may contract syphilis the day after she leaves the hospital, and during all the remainder of the fortnight she may be spreading it abroad amongst the people ... so that if the plague were not stayed by artificial means it would be continually as it were reengendering itself. (76-77)

The figure of the diseased prostitute lurking about, ready to spread contagion to unsuspecting men, invoked a fear used to legitimate forced surveillance and medical detention of any women suspected of prostitution. Not only must this disease be searched out and confined, it must be described, charted, relished in its vileness:

> Commissioner: Now if a woman is sent into a hospital with a uterine discharge, or abrasion, or ulceration of the cervix, on what data would you form an opinion as to whether that was a contagious disease within the meaning of the Acts?
> Moore: Well looking at these things alone and not knowing any history of secondary syphilis referring to that woman, I should say, I think they are contagious, because they are prostitutes. I believe the diseases are contagious. I think the discharge is contagious and the ulceration of the {?} is contagious, because the women are prostitutes, and out plying their trade.
> Commissioner: Then you would not say there is anything in the nature of these discharges in themselves which would enable you to state whether they were symptoms of contagion or not?
> Moore: Not of themselves. I would say this, in fact I know, that in a prostitute there is a

> discharge from the uterus, a purulent discharge, which is never or very seldom indeed present in a virtuous woman. (81)

In a miraculous feat of warped logic, then, women were forcibly locked in hospitals on the basis of symptoms which could not be with any certainty defined as contagious disease. What's more, they were defined as diseased *because* they had previously been defined as prostitutes. (And both definitions, as I have already demonstrated, are arbitrary constructions, acts of violent symbolic imposition which result in violent medical detention.) This diagnosis of disease is a *moral*, not a *medical* one. Similarly, the definition of prostitution was a moral, not a *legal*, one. Women were subject to detention for prostitution on the discretion and at the whim of the medical police, a legal-medical body given authority over working-class women's bodies. These women had no legal rights once detained. As Anniss explained it, women who did not voluntarily submit themselves for examination could be "taken before the magistrate and punished" (49). Once confined to the hospital, "No woman is to be discharged within ten days of her admission to the Lock wards, without the opinion of the visiting surgeon being first taken" (71). But even women whose symptoms could not be classified as contagious were, as a matter of course, locked up. Pickthorn notes that:

> In performing my duty ... I have looked on all ulceration of the genitals in prostitutes, women having indiscriminate intercourse, as dangerous. I think the Commission will agree that it is safe to

> leave it to the resident surgeon afterwards, when they come under his treatment, whether they are actually virulent or not, but if they are pouring out puss, and that is from the vagina, I conceive that contact is unsafe for the man ... I think in a prostitute all those ulcerations are dangerous. (46)

It is important to note that, in this discourse, a prostitute is a woman "having indiscriminate intercourse." "Indiscriminate intercourse" could mean anything from serial monogamy to premarital sex with one's fiancé. And, according to Victorian medical definitions, women with yeast infections could be sent to the hospital, from which they could not be discharged in less than ten days and were more often kept for periods up to several months.

Many women, of course, rebelled. Mr. S. Wolferstan testified that a "considerable number" of women were sent to prison while he was at the Albert Hospital, "principally for the offenses of running away from the hospital without being discharged therefrom, and making disturbances in the wards of the hospital" (117). These women responded to more than the forced detention, to more than the barbarisms passing as medical treatment. They also responded to being reduced to animal, bestial bodies upon whom any action was justified. The construction of the sexual woman's body as animal and subhuman justifies any forced medical procedure the state, for its due safety, sees fit to render. Commissioner Applegarth asks: "Do you suppose there is any treatment to which they could be subjected that really would degrade them beyond the

one to which they are degraded at the present time?" (292). The question here, of course, presupposes the answer: NO. Penetration is penetration, by penis or speculum; a sexually active working-class woman is a *penetrable* body and can thus have no logical objection to a speculum exam.

And, as we have seen, sexual women cannot be good *mothers*. The *pregnant* fallen woman is a particularly abominable beast. As Pickthorn says:"The fact is this, some of these pregnant women are the worst of the prostitutes, and have up to the very time of confinement connection with more than one man in a night very likely, and to talk of a small speculum hurting them when that is the case, I certainly think is mis-stating the fact" (46). The pregnant sexual woman, flying as she does in the face of the ideology of the domestic woman, becomes a particular object of scorn.

This construction of the prostitute as a lying, unfeeling, subhuman animal body with no rights also justified a complete surveillance network with which to hunt them down. This surveillance made every woman the appropriate object of the police/medical gaze. (Olive Shcreiner was once detained under these Acts, evidence that no woman in public space was immune to the penetrative police gaze.) Additionally, there was no clear definition of prostitution, so *all* working-class women were subject to interrogation and arrest. Anniss testifies that "In the case of a woman occasionally committing herself with men, if we were to be acquainted with it, we

should, being governed by circumstances, endeavor to bring her under the Act" (16). The official criteria for establishing a woman as a prostitute were:

> The tests of prostitution relied upon by the police are stated by them to be as follows:--residence in a brothel; solicitation in the streets; frequenting places where prostitutes resort; being informed against by soldiers and sailors; and lastly the admission of the woman herself. (6)

These criteria give rise to enormous ambiguity. A brothel could be defined as a lodging house in which prostitutes were known to reside. But, since any poor urban housing area could at various times have rooms let to women making their living selling their sexual labor, as well as to women selling their manual labor in sweatshops and factories, "residence in a brothel" is hardly a specific charge. Similarly, "solicitation" could mean speaking to a man in the streets, and "frequenting places where prostitutes resort" could mean walking home from work through Regent Street or Piccadilly Circus. Moreover, "police often acted upon the information obtained from the men in hospital" and forcibly arrested women accused of giving infected men a venereal disease (6).

The practice of arresting women on the reports of diseased soldiers was a well established method of surveillance in Malta, the first overseas military port to come under the operation of the Acts. In Malta, "whenever a man contracted any form of venereal disease in the fleet, the ship's corporal generally took him to the place where he

contracted it, and any woman he reported as having given him the disease was at once taken before the surgeon for examination" (48). This discourse does not acknowledge the possibility that a man may already have been infected and that *he* thus spread the disease to women with whom he had sex. While the role of military men spreading venereal disease was a theme in repeal movement discourse, it held absolutely no legitimacy within the medical/military/legal discourse of the CDA. McClintock offers an interesting perspective on this, arguing that "the Acts were designed less to abolish prostitution than to place control of sex work in the hands of the male state. The initial impetus came from the recent blows to male national self-esteem in the arena of empire" (288).[21]

This lack of definition about who was and wasn't a prostitute and the unreliable methods of informing against and spying on women clearly enough demonstrate the extent to which all women were possible targets of police arrest and medical detention. But the full extent to which working-class women

[21]I find McClintock's argument most interesting in its link between military failure overseas and the domestic treatment of women. This relation between sexual violence towards women and national and gender identity is important. We see manifestations of this in everything from rape as a tactic to war (doesn't Bosnia loom largely in all of our minds?) to programmatic opposition to and sexual harassment of women in the only-now expanding male enclave of the military. However, I do not accept McClintock's too-easy equation of "male" and "state." As I have already argued, I would place the largely women-run opposition to the Contagious Diseases Acts in the category of state agency.

are conflated with the diseased animal body of the prostitute is perhaps most clearly shown in this testimony from the Royal Commission reports:

> Commissioner: Do not you find there are young women who follow some trade, such as the selling of lucifer matches, who are prostitutes in disguise?
> Anniss: Yes, that is the most difficult class we have, because they get about in the fields and lanes at night, though the numbers are less than they were years ago, they do a great deal of damage, and sometimes communicate venereal disease to men--very frequently. They travel about as tinkers &c., who do anything but work, and do a great deal of damage in communicating disease at the present time. (22)

This discourse configures the contagious working-class woman's body as threatening on two registers: she is the dirty diseased poor; *and* she could evade state surveillance. She is dangerous precisely because she "get[s] about in fields and lanes at night." The *product* of her work cannot be visibly ascertained (how many matches does a match-girl sell?), and her body cannot be easily controlled. Anniss twice cites the "damage" such women do.

Once a woman was registered as a prostitute and subject to forced medical exams, it was nearly impossible to prove herself "respectable." A woman who applied to have her name removed from the police registers was the object of continued surveillance and investigation to prove the validity of her claim to respectability. What's more, the decision whether or not to remove a woman's name from the register rested with the police, whose often arbitrary assessments of "respectable"

behavior conflicted sharply with working-class women's understanding of "respectability":

> Commissioner: Supposing a woman said she was going to live with a particular man and went to live in a house with him, should you consider that sufficient reason for taking her off the books?
> Anniss: In that case she would have to make a written application, and I should make inquiries as far as possible whether she had ceased to be a prostitute or not, and act accordingly. (31)

The surveillance thus extended into every area of working-class women's lives, and continued throughout her residence in towns subject to the Acts. And the surveillance *was* formidable. Inspector Anniss details his surveillance measures for determining the numbers of prostitutes in Devonport and Plymouth:

> I took a district each morning. At that time, I had charge of the apprehension of stragglers and deserters, having under me six men employed specially for that purpose, called the water police, and we had to visit all these houses for the apprehension of those men, and I took the number of prostitutes sleeping in each house on a particular night, so many streets each day until I had gone through the three towns, taking the number of women in each house. (18)

In addition, the constables "visit the brothels, and report to me any strangers found in them at night, also inform me if they see women soliciting for prostitution who are not on the register, and ascertain their residence, to enable me to see them and bring them on the register if necessary" (30).

That many women were unjustly apprehended and imprisoned under these acts is, of course, the fuel lighting the fire of the LNA and similar repeal efforts. The numbers of women

subject to speculum examinations were staggering. Thomas Russell Pickthorn, visiting surgeon to the Devonport district, testified that he examined over 10,000 women in one year--10,000, when the examinations were once every two weeks! Despite the contradictions and logical confusions surrounding definitions of "prostitutes" and "respectable" behavior, *and* despite a decade worth of resistance from repeal groups, these Acts remained in effect until 1886. The military, medical, and legal arms of the state apparatus persisted in the belief that "the causes which have reduced the number, and will reduce it wherever the Acts go" of prostitutes is "good advice, the influence of the police, and the hospital" (33).

Perhaps the most poignant account of the effect of these acts upon the women whose lives they interrupted is from an excerpt read during the investigation of Jane Sanders' statement to the police after her arrest. When asked to explain the statements given by Sanders, a woman whose detention became a focal point of activity against illegal confinement, M.M. Moore, Surgeon to the London Lock Hospital, says: I am afraid you would not understand the answers." After further prompting, Moore reads from Sanders' statement:

> Question: Why were you brought to the Royal Albert Hospital?
> Answer. Brought there, like all other women, I supposed, because all living this life have to be brought here.
> Question: Were you served with a notice to attend at the surgeon's room or at the hospital, or did you sign a voluntary submission?
> Answer: I had a paper to attend to be examined, and I was brought here like all other women.

> Question: Are you now in a state of ill health?
> Answer: No, sir, I am not.
> Question: Do you wish to be inspected by a medical man not connected with the hospital?
> Answer: Yes, sir.
> Question: Do you wish to apply to the magistrates for an order for your discharge?
> Answer: Yes, sir. (74-75)

I read "this" in Sanders' phrase "all living this life have to be brought here" to refer, not to "prostitutes" per se, but to poor working-class women subject to the surveillance of the medical police. Read in this way, Sanders' statement hints at a fatalistic endurance of the state's power over her. Counter to this, though, is the hint we get of women who, subversively, learned how to manipulate their positions under the CDA. Many women used certificates discharging them from the Lock Hospital and certifying them as "clean" to secure customers. This was such a common practice (and one that scandalized the opposition to the Acts) that women selling sex in garrison towns were referred to as "the Queen's Women."[22] The success with which many women used their certificates to enhance their profits is evident in this response from Dr. F. Row:

> I fear that the improved status of these women may eventually cause them to be regarded as a

[22]The Queens Women" refers both to the certificate, in her majesty's name, certifying the women as free of disease, and to the implication that, as prostitutes "servicing" Her Majesty's Fleet, they were performing a sanctioned service to the state. One of the opposition's major points of contention was that the CDA's in effect legalized and controlled prostitution, ensuring easy access to "safe" sex for military personnel.

> privileged well-cared-for class; and that to prevent such a result there should be something repressive as against the individuals who are practicing crime. (70)

Clearly, it would not do for "prostitutes" to show the signs of economic success: may feared that "virtuous" working-class women would be tempted to a life of prostitution because, compared to the poverty of factory girls, shop-workers and domestic servants, prostitution could seem a *desirable* profession. Row believes that, to prevent this, a "repressive" measure, "as against the individuals who are practicing crime," is called for. It is in this light that I would like to consider the twice-monthly forced speculum exam. Women reporting for examination were framed by their initial encounter with the police requirement that they be registered as prostitutes. The examination also threatened incarceration in a hospital prison if the doctor reported a woman to be diseased. Thus the twice-monthly ritual herding and medical examination *did* function as a "repressive" measure, a way of reminding "prostitutes" of who they were. The exam, by assembling women for a medical inspection, conferred upon them a *group* identity which functioned as both definition and demarcation: the *prostitute* was defined against and kept away from the *respectable* woman. Moreover, the exam itself embodies aspects of both an external coding of the body (the speculum is introduced into the body, writes the prostitute body as accessible to and penetrable by the state) and an incorporated sign (consistently taken into the body, the

speculum evokes a dimension in which, symbolically and imaginatively, the incorporated speculum figures as an extension of the prostitute body). The speculum exam thus performed what Bourdieu calls the work of inculcation:

> More convincingly than the external signs which adorn the body (like decorations, uniforms, army stripes, insignia, etc.), the incorporated signs (such as manner, ways of speaking--accents--, ways of walking or standing--gait, posture, bearing--, table manners etc. and taste) which underlie the production of all practices aimed, intentionally or not, both at signifying and at signifying social position through the interplay of distinctive differences, are destined to function as so many calls to order, by virtue of which those who might have forgotten (or forgotten themselves) are reminded of the position assigned to them by the institution. (123-24)

In case they "forget themselves," and think they have legitimacy (conferred, perhaps, by the certificate, or by profit), "prostitutes" must be reminded that they exist in the margins, are "individuals who are practicing crime," and do not, in fact, have legitimate subject status under the law.

The speculum exam was by no means the only "call to order" reminding sexual working-class women of who they were. Institutional narratives (Foundling Hospital petitions, charity organization reports, religious and institutional narratives), the popular press, rescue narratives, and novels all performed this work of inculcation. In the following chapter, I focus on narratives of seduction and fictional representations of "the fall" as works of inculcation helping to restructure working-class women's sexual relations

according to the ideology of the feminine ideal, the middle-class domestic woman.

CHAPTER 3
WOMEN ON THE SCAFFOLD: BASTARDY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES IN *RUTH*, *ADAM BEDE*, AND *TESS OF THE d'URBERVILLES*

Narratives of Seduction

The Royal Commission Investigations and police and medical reports concerning prostitutes show that discourses constructing women as *sexual* beings simultaneously construct them as *bestial* and *depraved*. These constructions coexisted with the peculiarly Victorian move to *desexualize* women: Victorian discourses constructing the maternal, self-sacrificing domestic woman elided earlier narratives of the sexually desiring woman. As Ruth Perry argues, "historically women had been perceived as lascivious and lustful creatures, fallen daughters of Eve, corrupting and corrupted. But by the middle of the eighteenth century they were increasingly reimagined as belonging to another order of being: loving but without sexual needs, morally pure, disinterested, benevolent, and self-sacrificing" (115-116). Asexual women constructions, however, presented a logical conundrum for Victorians concerned with the "problem" of prostitution. If women lack sexual feeling, how, then, does one account for the large numbers of women living by means of their sexual bodies? As Kalikoff argues, "for much of the century, the fallen woman

seemed to represent a national moral problem that assaulted belief in the rational as thoroughly as murder did" ("Victorian Sexual Confessions" 99). Social purity writers, trying to reconcile asexual women living by sexual work, "used the idea of female passionlessness to deny that women played any active role in prostitution: they portrayed women as vulnerable through poverty or ignorance to the lust of men" (Valverde 174-175). Narratives portraying innocent women seduced by sexually insatiable men managed to maintain the constructions of asexual women by explaining the fall into prostitution as the result of *man's* sexual desire: within this discourse, an innocent (virgin and unaware of sexual desire) woman is seduced and corrupted by a guilty (sexually desiring and designing) man.

While at one level seduction narratives maintained the asexual woman construction necessary to the ideology of the domestic woman, at a deeper level they masked fears of women's sexual uncontainability. Within this discourse, women, even if they do not *experience* desire, *elicit* it. The seduction narrative's over-emphasis on an actively desiring male subject at whose hands an innocent woman suffers is, as Kalikoff argues, uncomfortably close to "the rhetoric of first-person Victorian pornography" ("Sexual Confessions" 103). While on one register these narratives are sympathetic to the suffering of victimized women, on another they reproduce and redeploy this victimization. Constance D. Harsh sees "reformers

preoccupation with women as victims" as "complicit with efforts to limit the power and respect granted women in English society" (*Subversive Heroines* 63). The (re)production and (re)deployment of victim narratives was in part a response to the "genuine dread of female sexual, social, and economic autonomy" barely concealed in popular fiction and nonfiction (Kalikoff "Falling Woman" 357). Clearly, narratives representing the victimized woman were in the service of the ideology of the domestic woman. This becomes particularly clear when we juxtapose women's petitions for admission of their children to the London Foundling Hospital with fictional representations of fallen women. This juxtaposition also reveals the mutual imbrication of narratives of seduction with medico-legal narratives informing the Contagious Diseases Acts (and the institutions of the hospital, court, and police necessary to the implementation and administration of the Acts).

The Foundling Hospital and Sexual Confession

There is a direct relation between the surveillance networks investigating prostitutes, who have no access to the word or to truth, and those investigating and establishing the "truth" of women's petitions for their children's admission to the Foundling Hospital. Established in 1747, the London Foundling Hospital accepted the illegitimate children of women

who could *prove* themselves respectable and deserving of help.[23] Social disapproval of help offered to those perceived as profligate exacerbated the hospital's requirement for proof of a woman's virtue. But, as Bernd Weisbrod in his important study, "How to Become a Good Foundling in Early Victorian London" argues:

> The ability to deal with each case individually was dependent on the development of the 'inquisitorial technique' applied not only to the petitioner herself but also in some degree to persons with whom she had immediate social contact. Thus, 'restoring the mother to a course of Industry and Virtue' became the second acknowledged object of the Foundling Hospital. (197)[24]

The procedures for admission of children varied somewhat over the years, but, by the mid 1800's, a complete system of confession and investigation was in place to differentiate the worthy victim from the profligate fallen woman. Battling

[23]William Acton's 1859 "Observations on Illegitimacy in the London Parishes of St. Marleybone, St. Pancras, and St. George's, Southwark" laments that "the existing Foundling Hospital ... has ... ceased ... to carry out the true intent and meaning of its founder. With a revenue of the present value of £11,000 a year, and with an assured income within the present century (according to the statements of the Charity Commissioners) of £40,000 a year, this institution so wanders from its legitimate path and from propriety of administration, that each of its inmates costs it nearly £360 before attaining 15 years of age, besides being unhealthy and unnecessarily reared in the atmosphere of the metropolis; and has but a poor start in life after all" (505).

[24]For an interesting comparison between London's and France's Foundling Hospital issues, see Jacques Donzelot's "The Preservation of Children" in *The Policing of Families*. Donzelot sees popular images of working-class mothers as lax, self-interested, and hopelessly incompetent as the "legacy of an encounter between the working-class woman and state assistance" (31).

accusations of mismanagement, the Foundling Hospital instructions specify that "no child can be admitted unless the Committee is satisfied, after due enquiry, of the *previous good character*, and present necessity of the Mother and that the Father of the Child has *deserted* it and the Mother." The 1840 Charity Commissioners' Report specified that women had to demonstrate that, "previous to committing the offence," they had an "irreproachable character, but yielded to artful and long-continued seduction, and an express promise of marriage" (Weisbrod 205). To be *good*, they must also be able to provide *witnesses* on their behalf; their stories of sexual victimization had to be *investigated* by a team of social workers, police and lawyers, and *testified to* by employers, neighbors, doctors, families, and friends.

Weisbrod argues that women's disclosure of details of their sexual intercourse--including how many times intercourse occurred, where, under what circumstances--"forced the petitioner into the position of a defendant in a criminal trial and wrung from her a confession for an act which was not necessarily regarded by her as an offence" (201).[25] This sexual confession, Weisbrod argues, "may be seen as an extreme version of the Foucauldian equation of power and knowledge ... For those mothers who had lost in the game of how to marry as

[25]Kalikoff further argues that the sexual confession, "clearly informed by the discourse of both criminal and Christian confession ... resonates as the moment when the fallen woman is simultaneously penitent and criminal, caught between divine forgiveness and human punishment" (112).

a domestic servant and who were prepared to disclose their personal secrets, the confession offered at least a chance for the ritual exchange of motherhood for respectability" (208-9). Kalikoff argues that, in fact, Foundling Hospital confessionals produced "a theater of penitence" in which "the fallen woman was the drama's central figure, suggesting a conflation of two familiar characters of popular melodrama, the vulnerable heroine/victim and guilty sinner" ("Sexual Confessions" 103).

Kalikoff's analysis of Foundling Hospital petitions as "confessional" documents and the petitions' use of "melodramatic" characterization is particularly important to an intertextual reading of the ideological *work* of narratives of the fall. Kalikoff argues that:

> The confessions themselves become fictional byproducts--eventually documents--of the erotic process of voyeurism and humiliation in the sexual confession ritual. The questioners, with their rigidly eccentric rules and their tireless desire to penetrate the applicant's best-protected secrets, became actors in a public drama of erotic exposure and dominance. ("Sexual Confessions" 102)

Petitioners, required to tell the story of their seduction, were forced to reinscribe a plot which demanded that women be coerced or tricked into sex, victimized, and deserted. The petitions follow a very consistent narrative formula which parallels the formula of popular novels: a woman meets a man, falls in love, is used badly and then deserted, left pregnant and alone in the world. And, like the novels, the "plot" of the petitions is set in motion only when the two main

characters--the victimized woman and the victimizing man--meet. The petitions invariably begin: "When first acquainted with the father," and then go on to give the details of the "seduction." But, while the narrative *structure* reproduces popular seduction motifs, the details of the "seduction" often tell a story very different than that of popular fiction. These petitions provide a subtext which tells the story of working-class women's (sexual) desire. There is, for example, the case of Jane Sims, whose July 1875 petition reads:

> When first acq (sic) with the F. (sic), I was living with Mr. And Mrs. Alment (sp?), 4, Belgrave Villas ... I met him when I was out walking in October 1843 and he spoke to me, and we walked together: I met him again by appointment and we kept company, he visiting the house unknown to my Master and Mistress: In April 1844, he seduced me in my Master's House under promise of marriage. c.c.[26] was continued until September, when I left Mrs. Alment on account of my condition.

Sims "kept company" with her lover for six months before intercourse, and continued her relation with him for another five months. This "confession" reads conspicuously like the history of a working-class courtship which, under other circumstances, could have easily led to marriage. Similarly, Emily Shearing writes in July of 1873: "I met him [the father] accidentally at first: he proposed marriage to me and I accepted him, with the knowledge and sanction of my Master and Mistress. I met him everyday and sometimes twice." And there is Mary Ann Calvert, who "used to walk out with him; we were

[26]Sexual intercourse is designated in these petitions by the abbreviation c.c.

engaged." While there *are* many petitions detailing rape, incest,[27] and cruel abandonment, the largest part of the petitions tell the story of working-class men and women meeting, courting, and loving.[28] Gillis argues that, "for working-class women, fertility was still regarded as an asset and that, if not for the middle-class's moral and legal condemnation of pre-marital pregnancy, many of the couples whose children ended up in the Foundling Hospital would eventually have married." Foundling Hospital petitions reveal the sexual behavior of these women "to be indistinguishable from that of others of similar background" (133).[29] Acton's

[27]The large numbers of incest cases was cause for considerable alarm. It was widely believed that such cases were the result of the crowded living conditions, lack of privacy, and moral degeneracy of the poor. The conflation of poverty with immorality constructed incest as a *class* phenomenon. See James Kay Shuttleworth's *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes*, Henry Mayhew's *London Labor and the London Poor*, and Gerry Kearns and Charles W.J. Withers, eds., *Urbanizing Britain: Essays on Class and Community in the Nineteenth Century*.

[28]Weisbrod points out that the vast majority of all applications for admission were refused. The increasing emphasis on examining and investigating cases heavily weighted admission decisions in the favor of women "who could keep up appearances and ...provide some sort of decorum" (202). It is thus quite logical that, as Gillis notes, upper domestic servants comprise the majority of successful admissions. Weisbrod argues that the over-representation of upper domestic servants points to the vast numbers of working-class women, lacking a comparable ability to "keep up appearances," who were *refused*. I would argue that, in fact, those women whose petitions *were* accepted proved the *most domesticable*, and that, even within this sample, we see a great divergence between working- and middle-class standards of acceptable sexual and family relations

[29]Using the fact that the greatest number of women petitioning the Foundling Hospital were upper domestic

survey of illegitimacy draws similar conclusions. Indeed, many social reformers of the time attributed problems of illegitimacy to the living and laboring conditions preventing working-class men and women from forming their own households and raising children within the constraints of an urban industrial economy. Acton believed that "could some slight pecuniary encouragement be forthcoming, the father of the child would marry the mother and become a reformed character" ("Observations" 494).

The Foundling Hospital petitions, then, *do* tell the story of working-class women's sexual desire. But the hospital institution--investigators, board of governors, doctors, charity workers, staff--had a vested interest in constructing seduction narratives in which asexual women were victimized by sexually desiring men. The institution required a proliferation of this narrative of seduction: women had to tell and write their stories, get "witnesses" to retell and rewrite parts of that story; investigators read the petitions, questioned and re-questioned the women, their witnesses, their neighbors and employers. If a woman was sufficiently

servants, Gillis argues that the conditions of servitude imposed unmanageable constraints on these women. In this "exclusively celibate occupation, marriage marked a definitive end to a female servant's career" (121). Women servants were expected to internalize the moral codes of their middle-class employers, they were cut off from family-supervised courtships and left to meet men on their own, and they would not be able to continue domestic work while raising a family. Additionally, the men with whom they become involved had to move to keep employment.

established as a victim, then she could be helped. To be helped (read saved), she must be penitent. She must have suffered and learned a lesson from her suffering. If she had appropriately suffered and was properly penitent--that is, if she proved herself suitably domesticable--her child could be taken off her hands and she would be returned to her place in service, usually in a household as a domestic servant but sometimes also in shops or factories. She was then "free" to "pursue a life of virtue and care for other people's children" until she married and began to labor in the service of her legitimate children (Weisbrod 202).

This confessional structure of the petitions, then, was part of the on-going (re)production of the fall with which the middle-class moral reformers conducting the investigations were so preoccupied. In both novels and Foundling Hospital petitions, the good/asexual victim narrative elides woman's sexual desire and amplifies man's sexual desire. The logic of this narrative bifurcation collapses, though, when we compare the "seducers" of the Foundling Hospital petitions to the "seducers" in popular novels. Women's petitions to the Foundling Hospital generally tell the story of same-class relations broken off because of lack of money and the working-class father's inability to support a wife and child. The novel's seduction narrative, on the other hand, relies heavily on an upper-class seducer who takes advantage of a young woman's innocence and vulnerability. As Kalikoff notes,

"class is almost always a crucial element in the equation of seduction" ("Falling Woman" 358). The novel does NOT tell the story of working-class sexual and familial relations in which premarital sex is not uncommon or particularly taboo, or in which many women are more or less happily married *after* pregnancy (an outcome clearly expected by many of the women who successfully petitioned the Foundling Hospital).[30] Within the novel's narrative structure, all premarital or extra-marital sex results in pain and suffering. Given the discrepancy between these popular narratives featuring the suffering of the fallen woman and indications from Foundling Hospital petitions that many working-class women still perceived premarital sex as a normal aspect of courting, we must ask what ideological *work* such narratives performed. Sex outside of legitimate marriage was in the process of being defined as deviant for working-class women, and, within this discursive production, any unmarried sexually active woman was a *fallen* woman. But, in order for working-class women to be domesticated, they must accept middle-class sexual mores. The Foundling Hospital's ritual of confession helped to

[30]It is true that the petition process *demanded* that the successful candidate prove that she was seduced with promises of marriage. It is thus possible that many of the petitioners, in order to have their children accepted in the Foundling Hospital, exaggerated the importance of marriage proposals to their sexual involvements. But it is also true that many of the petitions narrating "seduction" include correspondence between the couples discussing marriage and the future of the relationship. Obviously, a great many of these women *did* believe that they would eventually marry their lovers.

indoctrinate working-class women into middle-class sexual mores: if the petitioner confessed the sin of her sex, she could be relieved of her child and have another chance to lead a "respectable" life. The confession, however, also entails a *penance*: one cannot be absolved of sin unless one has done penance for it. In this sense, "the confession of the fallen woman stands at the heart of [Victorian] texts and contexts because of the way it evoked the Victorian erotics of punishment" (Kalikoff "Sexual Confessions" 111). The unrepentant sexually active woman was *bad*. The repentant sexually active woman could be redeemed, but only after she repented for the sin of her sexual activity. And, of course, sexually deviant women could not be good mothers or appropriately raise children. (Ironically, it was precisely those women deemed *morally deficient* who were left to raise their own children as well as they could.) Narratives of seduction in which fallen women suffer and are punished thus performed the ideological work of disseminating the middle-class ideal of the domestic woman into working-class culture and effectively restructured working-class sexual relations.

The Novels

As Kalikoff notes, Foundling Hospital petitions and institutional narratives appropriate the figures of melodrama --the innocent victim/heroine and the guilty sinner. Clearly, then, institutional and fictional narratives construct and are

constructed by each other. This chapter expands my analysis of the ideological work performed by narratives of the fall to include an analysis of this work in novels as well as institutional documents. I examine narratives of seduction in five novels: Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* and *Mary Barton*, Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*, George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, and Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. I link *Ruth*, *Adam Bede*, and *Tess* because each of these novels feature fallen women who bear illegitimate children. *Ruth* is particularly relevant for an analysis of the discourse of purity in which working-class motherhood provides the opportunity for self-sacrifice and redemption. Interestingly, *Ruth* also details the method by which working-class women may be properly domesticated. My analysis of *Adam Bede* reveals the relationship between the "love of finery" discourse and fears of working-class women's resistance to domestication. Finally, my analysis of *Tess* shows how earlier narratives of women's threatening sexual body underwrite even domestic woman discourses in which women's sexuality is elided. I then go on, in chapter four, to read *Mary Barton* and *David Copperfield* for bourgeois, national, and imperial investments in domesticating working-class women.

Ruth

Ruth's seduction narrative relies on those popular images so important to Victorian reform and rescue narratives--the

sexually designing upper-class man and the asexual, innocent working-class girl.[31] Ruth's innocence makes her the perfectly blameless victim. After a series of misadventures (she is orphaned, put out to work, fired, and cast alone into the world), Ruth is left utterly at the mercy of her would-be seducer, Bellingham. Gaskell's narrative indicts all of the social forces that contribute to a woman's fall--the male seducer, employers too ready to cast young women alone into the world, the parents and adults who fail in their responsibility to supervise, educate, and protect young women. Though the narrative insists that all of these factors are *culpable* in Ruth's fall, it is nevertheless Ruth who is *morally responsible* for her fall. That is, her redemption requires that she internalize the middle-class sexual codes of

[31]Amanda Anderson has already done an excellent analysis of Gaskell's critique of the role romance and melodrama play in the discursive production of prostitution. She argues that Ruth exposes the relationship between foolish romanticism and young women's susceptibility to seduction. Moreover, it emphasizes the socially constituted nature of fallenness (129). While my work has been informed by Anderson's sensitive critique of agency, our emphases are somewhat different. Anderson posits Gaskell's "ideal realm of recovery and redemption" as "a domestic harmony secured by sympathetic communing" (127). I am interested in analyzing the constituents of this domestic harmony. Anderson concedes that "Gaskell's failure to overcome the problem of eclipsed or attenuated consciousness" reminds us of "the very real asymmetries of class and gender that structured her social world" (139). My concern is more material: what *are* these asymmetries of class and gender? What relation do they bear to the industrial capitalist city and imperialism? How do they construct discourses of motherhood, family, state, and work? What is the ideological work of these Victorian discourses and how do they inform contemporary gender debates?

which she was ignorant and judge herself and her actions by those codes before her suffering from and penance for her sexual transgression can redeem her.

Ruth transgresses, not because of her sexual desire, but because others failed to teach, care for, and protect her. Ruth in fact already *has* the qualities of the Victorian angel in the house: like Ruth, the "angel" is "loving but without sexual needs, morally pure, disinterested, benevolent, and self-sacrificing" (Perry 115-116). In fact, Ruth is so innocent that, until she overhears an accusation against her as a "bad" woman, she does not even realize that her relationship to Bellingham is "sinful."[32] While Bellingham bears the direct *blame* for Ruth's fall (and Mrs. Mason, her guardian, parents, and old servants the indirect blame), Ruth, in order to be redeemed, must accept herself as a "sinner" and redeem herself through a life of spiritual and physical self-sacrifice and labor. This tension between purity and sin structures the novel: Ruth is simultaneously innocent and fallen, free of sexual *desire* but guilty of sexual *activity*.

[32]Ruth's "innocence" raises several important issues, chief among which is that, as Anderson points out, "fallenness" is "socially constituted." Ruth is *unaware* of the social constructions defining sex outside of marriage as sinful. The novel presents Ruth's ignorance as a consequence of her mother's death--Ruth had nobody to *teach* her middle-class sexual mores. Ruth's ignorance also highlights the importance of mothers indoctrinating daughters into the domestic ideology. She is vulnerable to seduction because she "was too young when her mother died to have received any cautions or words of advice respecting the subject of a woman's life" (I 89). Her mother did not *warn* her about men like Bellingham.

The narrative thus preserves Ruth's blamelessness while simultaneously requiring her *reform*. Significantly, then, a religious redemption requires a social and political domestication.

Despite her "innocence," Ruth's redemption requires her suffering and penance. Before Thurston takes her in, Ruth's understanding that the world thinks badly of her makes her feel a "sorrowful humiliation" (I 192). And, after Bellingham deserts her, Thurston finds her suffering for her sexual transgression. He comes across her "crouched up like some hunted creature, with a wild, scared look of despair" (I 194). In one sense, as Anderson argues, Ruth's suffering through the failure of her relationship with Bellingham is part of Gaskell's critique of the romance plot. Young women, because they dream of being swept away by Prince Charming, are vulnerable to seduction and abandonment by ruthless men. But, in another sense, the narration of Ruth's fall works to demarcate and segregate the classes. Ruth's fall is defined as much by her *class* transgression as by her *sexual* transgression. Supposedly, if the primary constituent of the fall is premarital sex and illegitimacy, Ruth could be redeemed by legal marriage and legitimate motherhood. But when Bellingham, discovering that Ruth has borne his child, offers to marry her, Ruth must refuse. Within this narrative, marrying Bellingham constitutes a *spiritual* fall. She tells him that:

> All the days of my years since I have gone about with a stain on my hidden soul--a stain which made me loathe myself, and envy those who stood spotless and undefiled; which made me shrink from my child, from Mr. Benson, from his sister, from the innocent girls whom I teach--nay, even I have cowered away from God himself; and what I did wrong then, I did blindly to what I should do now if I listened to you. (II 313)

Even if we accept that Ruth's "stain" is her illicit intercourse with Bellingham, we must still ask what sin she would commit by marrying him and making Leonard his legitimate heir. Ruth sees marriage to Bellingham as spiritually dangerous because he is morally corrupt and proximity to him could corrupt their son. Since Ruth works out her redemption through her devoted self-sacrifice to Leonard, to put him in peril would negate the grounds on which she has earned redemption. But the ideology of the domestic woman *assumes* man's sexual desire and moral fallibility, and relies upon the domestic woman to be a moral guide and to contain male sexual desire. Thus Bellingham's moral shortcomings do not sufficiently explain why Ruth cannot marry Bellingham and restore him to a path of moral virtue. The threat of a spiritual fall is, however, comprehensible when we understand that Ruth's transgression is as much about class as it is about sex. It is no more acceptable for her to marry above her class than it is for her to have sex outside of marriage. Conveniently, the demands of *spiritual* redemption are in the service of a domesticating project that secures the labor of working-class women for middle-class homes and institutions.

Ruth's redemption, then, requires her *reform*. When the Bensons take her in, they embark not only on her *spiritual* education but also on her *domestic* education. She learns good housekeeping and domestic economy as well as scripture and moral philosophy. She is redeemed in part through her domestication. But the domestication of working-class women also required redefining their maternal duties. Working-class motherhood was being restructured according to bourgeois ideology, and this required putting the domesticated working-class woman's labor in the service of her children. When Thurston discovers that Ruth is pregnant, he sees her child as her opportunity for spiritual purification. He believes that:

> The little innocent babe ... may be God's messenger to lead her back to Him. Think again of her first words--the burst of nature from her heart! Did she not return to God, and enter into a covenant with Him--'I will be so good?' Why, it draws her out of herself! If her life has hitherto been self-seeking, and wickedly thoughtless, here is the very instrument to make her forget herself, and be thoughtful for another. Teach her (and God will teach her, if man does not come between) to reverence her child; and this reverence will shut out sin,--will be purification. (I 243)

Thurston's speech reveals the importance of motherhood to the ideology of domesticity. Motherhood emerges as a sacrifice of oneself to one's children, a sacrifice in which the sin of sex is purified. Ruth may be redeemed--purified--by forgetting herself in her child. Ironically, Ruth's redemption is possible *only because* the Bensons take her in. Left on her own, she *could not* have supported herself and Leonard through the legitimate work available to her, much less redeemed

herself through a self-sacrificial devotion to his needs. This indicates the impossibility of "redemption" for most single working-class mothers (bourgeois homes did not generally open their doors to them) and the centrality of the domestic woman's role *in* the home (she must *be at home* in order to be a good mother).

Adam Bede

As we see dramatized in *Ruth*, social purity discourse was characterized by the paradoxical argument that the victimized woman was both innocent of sexual desire and guilty of sexual activity. By attributing sexual desire to the victimizing male, seduction narratives negotiated the tension between the contradictory beliefs in the fallen woman's sexual innocence and her sexual guilt which required her redemption and reformation. Narratives attributing woman's fall to a love of finery performed a similar function. Valverde argues that William Acton popularized woman's passionless but sinful nature by explaining women's fall into prostitution as a result of their desire for fine dress and ornament (175). Valverde quotes Acton, a prominent physician and a proponent of the Contagious Diseases Acts:

> Every one now, I believe, admits that uncontrollable sexual desires of her own play but a little part in inducing profligacy of the female. Strong passions, save in exceptional cases, at certain times, and in advanced stages of dissipation, as little disturb the economy of the human as they do that of the animal female. ... If I seek to number the operative causes other than

> passion of the woman, I am met on the very threshold of the task by vanity, vanity, and then vanity--for what but this are love of dress and admiration, and what sacrifices will not tens of thousands of the uneducated make to gain these! (175)

Hetty Sorrel in *Adam Bede* exemplifies this type of passive but sinful female nature. *Adam Bede* plays out a seduction narrative between Hetty Sorrel, local cottager, and Arthur Donnithorne, local squire and heir to the estates. Hetty Sorrel falls, in part, because Arthur Donnithorne seduces her, but this seduction narrative is more complicated than that in *Ruth*. Whereas Ruth is presented as innocent and virtually blameless (though morally responsible) in her fall, Hetty bears a more direct responsibility for hers. Unlike Ruth, Hetty has caretakers (though, admittedly, her caretakers are her aunt and uncle, not the all-important domestic *mother and father*) to teach and protect her. But Hetty's *vanity and her love of finery* mark her as transgressive. Moreover, her vain desire for costuming makes her susceptible to Arthur's seduction. And, as Judith Mitchell notes in *The Stone and the Scorpion*, Hetty is scorned "for being aware of the power of [her] beauty, and for using that power" (93). Though she is presented as having no sexual desire of her own, she does have the power to *elicit* male sexual desire. The text explicitly links Hetty to prostitutes through her aesthetic pleasure in her own physicality and the use to which she puts her beauty. We see this connection relatively early in the text, when,

after Hetty puts a flower Adam gives her in her hair, he observes:

> Ah ... that's like the ladies in the pictures at the Chase; they've mostly got flowers or feathers or gold things i' their hair, but somehow I don't like to see 'm: they allays put me i' mind o' the painted women outside the shows at Treddles on Fair. (176)

The text constructs Hetty placing a flower behind her hair as a "love of finery," and "Hetty's love of finery was just the thing that would most provoke [Adam's] mother, and he himself disliked it as much" (176). However, the fall attributable to the desire for fine clothes and vanity is specifically tied to class. While the text consistently condemns vanity and praises plain dress, it is only the working-class women who, by virtue of vanity, is, ipso facto, fallen. Mrs. Irwine, "a beautifully aged brunette," wears "pure white cambric and lace," "pearls, diamonds, and turquoises" on her hands, and is so ornately costumed that the narrator speculates "it must take a long time to dress that old lady in the morning!" (49). The text caustically critiques such display, but this critique is within the acknowledgment of her *right* to display: Mrs. Irwine "is clearly one of those children of royalty who have never doubted their right divine and never met with any one so absurd as to question it" (49). She dislikes her daughters because they do *not* cultivate their aesthetic presentation: they are "inartistic figures crowding the canvas of life without adequate effect" (58). Mrs. Irwine is thus also linked to vanity and a "love of finery" (and hence to Hetty),

without, however, being threatened with a "fall." As Valverde argues, "what was or was not finery depended on the socio-economic and moral status of the wearer" (169).

Hetty's self-adornment *(also* likened to the pictures of the "ladies" at the Chase) thus links her both up to ladies and down to prostitutes. Both associations constitute a transgression--one of class bounds and the other of sexual bounds. When, at the games after Arthur's birthday feast, Arthur suggests that a "grim-looking gown" is not an adequate prize for young Bess, Miss Lydia says: "I would not think of encouraging a love of finery in young women of that class" (216). The discourses of fallenness attributable to laziness, love of dress and leisure, clearly articulate the centrality of class transgression to working-class women's "fall." Hetty desires jewelry, fine clothes, leisure, comfort, ease. In short, she desires upward social mobility:

> Hetty's dreams were all of luxuries: to sit in a carpeted parlour, and always wear white stockings; to have some large beautiful ear-rings, such as were all the fashion; to have Nottingham lace round the top of her gown, and something to make her handkerchief smell nice, like Miss Lydia Donnithorne's when she drew it out at church; and not to be obliged to get up early or be scolded by anybody. She thought, if Adam had been rich and could have given her any of these things, she loved him well enough to marry him. (83)

Hetty does not *want* a life of *work;* she wants a life of *leisure.* She is not interested in putting the rest of the world's needs before her own, is not maternal, and is not a good daughter:

> It was wonderful how little she seemed to care about waiting on her uncle, who had been a good father to her--she hardly ever remembered to reach him his pipe at the right time without being told, unless a visitor happened to be there, who would have a better opportunity of seeing her as she walked across the hearth. (124)

The text equates Hetty's failure to anticipate her uncle's desire (she does *not* have his pipe ready for him without being asked) with her vanity (she *does* like to strut before visitors). This narrative representation places women's bodies and labor in the service of men's desires (he should, after all, have his pipes) and marks women's failure to meet men's desires as aberrant. Added to this, the good domestic woman puts her body in the service of her legitimate children as well as her husband, father, uncles, brothers. But Hetty "would have been glad to hear that she should never see a child again," is not moved by "the downy chicks peeping out from under their mother's wing," and never formed an attachment to her cousin Totty (125). In short, as Mrs. Poyser concludes, "her heart's as hard as a pebble" (125). The narrative condemns Hetty as a bad daughter, a bad mother, a bad wife, a bad woman.

To refuse the role of worker in the growing industrial economy, then, is Hetty's primary transgression, a transgression which is *constructed* as sexual. Irwine cautions Arthur against "feeding her vanity and filling her little noddle with the notion that she's a great beauty, attractive to fine gentlemen," or he "will spoil her for a poor man's

wife" (84). Once she hopes for a lady's life, "her short poisonous delights" will:

> Spoil for ever all the little joys that had once made the sweetness of her life--the new frock ready for Treddleston fair, the party at Mr. Britton's at Broxton wake, the beaux that she would say 'No' to for a long while, and the prospect of the wedding that was to come at last when she would have a silk gown and a great many clothes all at once. These things were all flat and dreary to her now; everything would be a weariness, and she would carry about for ever a hopeless thirst and longing. (261)

This sentimental representation of "the little joys that had once made the sweetness of her life" constructs Hetty as foolish for dallying with Arthur and not recognizing Adam's value. Her desire is represented as excessive--after all, at her wedding she *would* have a "silk gown and a great many clothes at once." But on what grounds is Hetty's desire *excessive*? The narrative constructs as excessive the working-class woman's desire for middle-class lifestyles. Above and beyond all else, we cannot have women moving above their stations. Villainizing the desire for upward social mobility suggests middle-class fears of being unable to contain the working classes, to keep them in their place.[33]

[33]The Poyser's, part of the dying breed of tenant-farmers occupying a middling position in the old land/tenant relations, point to an anxiety-producing instability of class boundaries in the emerging industrial economy. Arguably, the desire to demarcate class boundaries intersects the increasing difficulty of doing so. A wide range of "working-class" identities and socio-economic conditions made labeling somewhat difficult. For instance, Adam (who has a trade and a business) could be either prosperous working-class or lower middle-class. How then does the middle-class ensure the privilege of its position? Hence the fear of upward social

Constructing Hetty's fall as sexual reduces her desire for upward social mobility, effectively neutralizing that desire, first by not acknowledging it as such (and, without acknowledging the desire as legitimate, without naming it, it never has to be addressed); and second by renaming it something else (vanity), which makes Hetty culpable in her own fall, guilty not just for what has been reduced and renamed as a sexual transgression but also for the circumstances leading up to that transgression. Moreover, this reduction contains working-class women's desire for upward social mobility within a discourse that makes sexual transgression punishable, the transgressor a victim of her own folly as much as of her

mobility speaks as much about middle-class fears of losing class status as it does about fears of being able to contain the working classes. As Amanda Anderson argues, narrative repetitions of the fallen woman's attenuated agency serve in part to reassure middle class [male] subjects of their own autonomy.

seducer's machinations[34]. The woman who transgresses *will* suffer, and suffer mightily!

Hetty's suffering is narrated within the context of a religious discourse that constructs "deep unspeakable suffering" as a "baptism, a regeneration, the initiation into a new state" (329). Hetty's suffering is her "baptism of fire" from which her soul may emerge "full of new awe and new pity" (330). It is, indeed, an ecstatic religious experience. When Hetty is in jail, awaiting her execution, Dinah tells Adam:

[34]Mrs. Poyser's tirade against domestic servants provides yet another angle from which to view the threat posed by working-class women adopting the signifiers (clothing, adornment) of the middle class. She decries valets as "neither a common man nor a gentleman" (263). She criticizes Hetty's desire to be a lady's maid on the grounds that Hetty "thinks there's nothing belongs to being a lady's maid but wearing finer clothes nor she was born to." Simultaneously, Mr. Poyser objects to Hetty earning her living as a servant; this compromises the family's pride in always having "eaten their own bread and cheese as fur back as anybody knows" (262). Hetty thus occupies a border between upper working-class and lower middle-class. Interestingly, then, that Hetty desires a clothing finer "nor she was born to," signifies a paradoxical *fall* from independent self-sufficience into servitude as well as a pretentious aspiration to a higher class status. The greater availability of the previously exclusive signifiers of class (silk, ribbons, lace) made it increasingly difficult to determine a person's *class* by virtue of her *dress*. Additionally, the new market opened a wide range of new *jobs*, most of which one was *not born to*. An explosion of new professions (domestic servitude among them) to manage the explosion of goods inevitably destabilized formerly rigid identity categories. The desire to read the station to which one was born signifies a fear of the fluidity of identity in the industrial capital state. For a particularly insightful development of the relation between the imperial market and identity structures, see Anne McClintock's *Imperial Leather*, especially chapter five, "Soft-soaping Empire."

> I must hasten back to her, for it is wonderful how she clings now, and was not willing to let me out of her sight. She used never to make any return to my affection before, but now tribulation has opened her heart. (353)

Similarly, when Adam comes to visit her in jail, Hetty is "clinging close to Dinah; her cheek was against Dinah's. It seemed as if her last faint strength and hope lay in that contact, and the pitying love that shone out from Dinah's face looked like a visible pledge of the Invisible Mercy" (355). At the last, Hetty is humbled. She tells Adam "I'm very sorry ... I behaved very wrong to you ... will you forgive me ... before I die?" (355). She begs Adam to kiss her again, for all she has "been so wicked," and further begs that he tell Arthur she "forgives" him.

Hetty's fall brings about her "purification" through the anguish of her suffering. Through this purification she is stripped of the fleshly beauty of corporeal femininity and endowed with the spiritual beauty of the domestic woman. When she faints from the news that the Loamshire Militia has left Windsor and she cannot obtain refuge with Arthur, Eliot writes: "Hetty ... had lost her miserable consciousness and looked like a beautiful corpse" (292). Hetty's death sentence for infanticide[35] conjures additional images of her as a

[35]Hetty's death sentence for infanticide intersects an important social and legal debate of the mid-1800's. On the one hand, this sentence is so extreme as to be almost socially unrecognizable. Legal and medical documents of the period are full of complaints that many infant deaths, suspected to be infanticide, were never recorded or reported as such. Even in the cases of certain infanticide (most of which were never

corpse. The narrative anticipates the moment at which Hetty is to "be hanged by the neck till [she] be dead" (337). Though Arthur arrives at the last minute with an order commuting her death sentence to transportation, both the original death sentence *and* the subsequent order of transportation are, within contemporary legal practice, unusually harsh punishments for infanticide. And, long before Hetty's "fall," Dinah imagines "a thorny thicket of sin and sorrow, in which she saw the poor thing struggling torn and bleeding, looking with tears for rescue and finding none" (127).

We must ask if the detail with which Hetty's suffering and death are imagined does not, indeed, point as much to a *desire* to punish transgressive women as it does to a *sympathy* for them. Hetty goes so far as to name Dinah's concern for salvation as a punishment. She asks Dinah: "Why do you come to frighten me? I've never done anything to you. Why can't you let me be?" (129). This narrative investment in Hetty's suffering and punishment points to the novel's participation in the ideological work of domesticating working-class women. And, while the text configures Dinah as Hetty's savior, we must ask if she is not, instead, the foreboding of Hetty's

actually tried) prison and transportation sentences were rare, and death sentences almost unheard of. A growing reaction against suspected infanticides did eventually lead to the Infant Life Protection Act of 1872. For a fuller discussion of the legal issues surrounding infanticide, see Ellen Ross' *Love and Toil*, chapters Six and Seven.

fall. Dinah, the spiritualized woman, appears as a death image, "covered with her long white dress, her pale face full of subdued emotion, almost like a lovely corpse into which the soul has returned charged with sublimer secrets and a sublimer lover" (128). She is shrouded, her flesh completely stripped of desire. She is a "lovely corpse" that experiences no "selfish jealousies" (127-28). The recurring corpse images suggest that it is precisely woman's fleshly corporeality that must be excised from images of the new domestic woman. We see within Dinah's narrative of redemption a drive to erase all signs of woman's sexuality. This narrative elevates the incorporeal woman without human desire. Hetty's suffering transforms her "pleasure-seeking nature" (129). She is purged of desire, her flesh "withered up" and stripped of her "woman's soul."

In this bifurcated flesh/spirit world, Dinah chooses the spirit over the flesh, the word over the body. She recalls "the happy hours [she's] had preaching, when [her] heart was filled with love, and the Word was given to [her] abundantly" (34). But Dinah's access to the word is grounded on her disavowal of her body. She rejects marriage and motherhood:

> From my childhood upwards I have been led towards another path; all my peace and my joy have come from having no life of my own, no wants, no wishes for myself, and living only in God and those of his creatures whose sorrows ad joys he has given me to know. (390)

By virtue of renouncing her physical self (marriage, children, desires or wishes for her own life), Dinah occupies a border

between woman/animal body and male/word-truth-law. It is Dinah's word that structures Hetty's confession. Dinah tells Hetty that they "are before God" and "He is waiting for you to tell the truth" (347). While Dinah does have, via preaching, access to the word, her *right* to this word is disputed throughout the text. Ultimately, Dinah gives up her preaching, her access to the word, and accepts her role as domestic wife and mother. However, before Dinah can become Adam's wife, Hetty, the object of his sexual desire, must be removed and Adam must recognize his higher domestic love for Dinah.[36] Concurrently, Dinah must realize her love for Adam, which requires both that she renounce her marginal access to the word and that she be relegated back to the body. She acquiesces in the church's decision to "forbid the women preaching." She consents to Adam's judgement that "most o' the women do more harm nor good with their preaching" and sees it "right to set th' example o' submitting" (413). Ironically, Adam (in Dinah's silent presence) delivers the speech informing Seth that Dinah has given up preaching. She is reduced to "a figure ... com[ing] out of the house...and

[36]Interestingly, three of the five novels I analyze have plots which center around the death/removal of an early and inappropriate object of male desire (the "fallen" woman) and the subsequent marriage to a properly domesticated woman. Tess is killed and Angel marries Liza-Lu, the "spiritualized" image of Tess. Hetty is transported and Adam marries Dinah. Dora dies and David marries Agnes. Moreover, two of these women (Tess and Dora) *request* that their husbands/lovers marry the desexed domestic woman, a self-sacrificing request which acknowledges that they are unsuitable mates and facilitates the transfer of male desire to suitable mates.

shading her eyes with her hands as she looks for something in the distance." Now more corporeal than spiritual, Dinah has a "sweet pale face," which is "a little fuller, to correspond to her more matronly figure." She ushers her children out of doors to await the return of the father. Having turned her eyes from God to Adam, she becomes, like Adam's mother, Lizbeth, "always on the look out for Adam, and could see him sooner than other folks" (412).

It is far easier to negotiate the narrative transformation from spiritual woman to domestic mother than from sexual woman to domestic mother. The ideology of the domestic woman requires that motherhood be detached from sexual desire (Perry 129). The mother's body maintains its asexual respectability by virtue of her physical body being in the service of her children. We must not forget that the working-class woman's domesticated body is a commodity, and her domestic labor essential to the industrial state.[37] As well as household management and child bearing and rearing, this labor includes keeping husbands and sons fit for and

[37]Anne McClintock argues that:

> The striking difference between the rationalizing of the market and the rationalizing of housework is that the latter is rationalized so as to render women's work invisible and to thereby disavow its economic value. The rationalizing of domestic labor in the nineteenth century involved massive expenditures of effort that went *unquantified* and *uncalculated*, since such work had to be excluded, as far as possible, from the rational market. (172)

The invisible nature of women's domestic work is especially important for working-class women, who often labored in middle-class homes as well as their own.

willing to work in the industrial city. Novels, which disseminated narratives punishing *undomesticated* working-class women and celebrating *domesticated* women, played an important role in the discursive (re)production of the cult of domesticity. Working-class women had to be presented as *desiring* their labor and *renouncing* upward social mobility. Hetty, whose transgressive desire crosses class and sexual bounds, also refuses her role as a domesticated working-class woman. Her narrative punishment is thus part of the novel's dissemination of a new code of acceptable, respectable motherhood, a code within which there is absolutely no place for illegitimate children or unmarried (or married after pregnancy) mothers.[38] This dissemination of bourgeois ideologies of the domestic woman and respectable motherhood effectually helped to criminalize working-class women's sexual existence outside of legitimate marriage.

In the new worker-state, then, women must be confined to the home as respectable wives and mothers. Illegitimate children, chief among all things, disrupt woman's capacity to labor in the service of the state (at the micro and macro levels). Hetty's pregnancy is a double transgression: it prevents her from performing legitimate

[38]As we will see in *Tess*, within Joan's paradigm, it would have been perfectly acceptable for Hetty and Arthur to marry, or, failing that, for Hetty and Adam to marry and raise Arthur's child together as though it were Adam's. That this is not within Hetty's paradigm marks *Adam Bede* as part of the on-going project to domesticate working-class women.

labor in the service of the state, and it disrupts Adam's labor. Adam must go to look for her, and, in his absence, "the business would be wanting him sadly" (309). The work he has begun is left undone, and his realization that Hetty has run away takes all the pleasure out of his work: "He threw himself on the bench and stared dully at the wood and the signs of work around him, wondering if he should ever come to feel pleasure in them again ... surrounded by the familiar objects that seemed for ever robbed of their charm"(309). Moreover, he cannot work the entire time Hetty is in prison and awaiting her sentence (319). Since one of the domestic woman's jobs is to facilitate labor, Hetty, in disrupting Adam's labor, is guilty of yet another transgression. As Donzelot has pointed out, domesticating women is the key to domesticating men:

> The strategy of familializing the popular strata in the second half of the nineteenth century rested mainly on the woman ... and added a number of tools and allies for her to use: primary education, instruction in domestic hygiene, the establishment of workers' garden plots, and Sunday holidays (a family holiday, in contrast to the Monday holiday, which was traditionally taken up with drinking sessions). ... In practice, the woman was brought out of the convent so that she would bring the man out of the cabaret; for this she was given a weapon--housing--and told how to use it: keep strangers out so as to bring the husband and especially the children in. (40)

Good women and good homes produce good workers. Bad women and bad homes produce bad workers: lazy, shiftless, *unmanageable*. Above all else, the working-class *must* labor, and the working-

class woman is the key to this labor. If she is domesticated, so too will working-class men be.

Within this discourse, one does not work out of necessity, but because it is intrinsically fulfilling. Adam swears that "there's nothing but what's bearable as long as a man can work" (95). At no point is the labor of work ever represented as distasteful to the *good* working-class man or woman. We do not see broken backs, malnutrition, early deaths, women suffering from incessant lactation, men dying from consumption, hands cracking from cold, heat, exhaustion, cuts bleeding, infection, illness. Work is abstracted, the body elided, and the ordeal of the laboring body turned into the ideal of the *good* working-class. *Adam Bede* is an exemplary celebration of working-class domesticity and labor. Adam, we read, "was not an average man. Yet such men as he are reared here and there in every generation of our peasant artisans--with an inheritance of affections nurtured by a simple family life of common need and common industry" (168). The key to the nurturing family life is, of course, women's labor. As Francis L. and Monica A. Fennell point out, "Lisbeth Bede...rises early to fix Adam's breakfast and will not believe her day's work is over until she can put out his late supper" (239). Adam, the good son with the domestic mother, constructs his identity in part *against* his father, Matthias. Thias leaves his work undone, drinks, and is *unproductive*. Next to Thias's failure as father and head of the family, Adam

(appropriately named!) "is like the patriarch Joseph, for his great skill and knowledge and the kindness he shows to his brother and his parents" (77-78). Adam is the new Abraham, the hope for the modern state. Because of his skill and industry, Arthur chooses him to manage the forests. Adam is:

> Intent on schemes by which the roads might be improved that were so imperfect all through the country, and on picturing all the benefits that might come from the exertions of a single country gentleman, if he would set himself to getting the roads made good in his own district. (304)

Adam's skill and industry indicate that he is the proper representative of the new industrial state. Agruably, *Adam Bede's* retrospective narrative, which opens in 1799 and closes in 1801, *is* about this transition from the old state to the new. This becomes particularly clear when we read it through the characters of Arthur Donnithorne and Dinah Morris. The plot develops around their concurrent return to Hayslope and the Donnithorne estate. Not yet 21, Arthur occupies the liminal position of heir waiting to inherit the Donnithorne estate. Interestingly, his birthday feast marks a crucial *transfer* of power, not, as we might expect, from the old squire to Arthur, but from Arthur to Adam. Arthur names Adam as the manager of his forests. This is especially important given that Arthur leaves the Chase shortly after achieving majority. Arthur's departure leaves Adam virtually in charge, thus effectively transferring power from the old families to the new state. The novel closes in 1801 with a scene of triumphant domesticity: Adam and Dinah married, with children.

The narrative, which literally crosses the eighteenth/nineteenth century border, thus (re)inscribes two of the most important events of the nineteenth century: the decline of the old aristocracy and the rise of the domestic woman.

Tess

Tess is the most exaggerated example of the ways in which narratives of sexually desiring men seducing innocent and sexually unaware women reveal earlier discourses of woman's threatening sexual body. This text also clarifies the punitive quality of Victorian narratives of the fallen woman's suffering, as well as the erotics of punishment such narratives inevitably conjure. The seduction narratives in *Tess* both reinscribe and problematize the innocent victim of seduction narrative.[39] The Alec/Tess seduction story follows the popular narrative structure in which an innocent (often country) girl is unscrupulously taken advantage of by a man

[39]Alec is from the capitalist middle-class, new money dressing itself up in an old aristocratic name. Alec's ambiguous identity embodies an important dimension of the extremely complex class demarcations with which the Victorians struggled. If, as Armstrong argues, the domestic novel helped to consolidate middle-class hegemony, this consolidation was far from seamless. While power was certainly shifting from the pre-industrial land-based rule of the aristocracy to an industrial money/commodity rule by the capitalists, this shift (arguably still underway) was by no means uniform or complete. The middle-/upper-class boundary presented as many definitional and demarcation problems as did the middle-/working-class boundary. The Alec/Tess seduction narrative, which engages issues of legitimacy, right, and national identity, engages several aspects of that confusion.

superior to her in class and worldliness. According to this plot, she is invariably ruined: she suffers severely for her "fall" and dies as either a direct or indirect result of it. In its broadest parameters, *Tess* too follows this structure. Tess is the vulnerable and innocent country maid seduced by the designing upper-class rake. Though she does marry Angel Clare, who is also superior to her in class and education, this marriage fails when he realizes she is not the pure country maid he imagined her. Her marriage is thus ruined as a result of her early experience with Alec and the child that resulted from it.

Mary Jacobus's comparison of manuscript versions of *Tess* to the serial and book publications reveals that, in the rejected drafts of the book, Tess was not so "pure," Alec was not so villainous and Angel was not so rigid. She argues that Hardy's difficulty getting *Tess* serially published "profoundly shaped the novel we read today, producing alterations in structure, plot, and characterization which undermined [Hardy's] fictional argument as well as strengthening it" (31). Jacobus argues that the original work, intended as "a lament for unfulfilled love, a tragedy of thwarted potential, focusing on the heroine's appropriation by the wrong man at the wrong time" (321) underwent a "sustained campaign of rehabilitation" which made *Tess* "so blatant a case of the double standard of sexual morality applied to men and women, and Tess herself so blameless, that the tragedy of the

ordinary becomes the tragedy of the exceptional--blackening both man and fate in the process" (323). Hardy's campaign to "purify" Tess falls squarely within the Victorian project of domesticating working-class women. A necessary consequence of this domesticating project, which involves erasing women's sexual desire, is what Jacobus refers to as "character assassination." Hardy's rewriting of Alec and Angel was both dictated by the cultural move to domesticate working-class women and reveals the consequences of it. Penny Boumelha argues that "the 'argument' that seeks, contradictorily, both to exonerate Tess and to secure forgiveness for her is partly an attempt to rescue her for a contentially-realized purity; as Jacobus has remarked, "Tess's purity ... is 'stuck on' in retrospect like the sub-title, to meet objections which the novel had encountered even before its publication" (128). Significantly, "purifying" Tess entails making her a passive victim of Alec's and Angel's sexual desire. To insist on Tess as "a pure woman," regarding her "as somehow immune to the experiences she undergoes," is to "deny her the right of participation in her own life. Robbed of responsibility, she is deprived of tragic status--reduced throughout to the victim she does indeed become" (319-20). Hardy's plot, reworked to meet the demands of the Victorian domestic woman ideology, clearly shows the consequences of the campaign to purify women: they are stripped of the agency with which to determine

the course of their lives, but still constructed as the agents of *men's* ruin.

Margaret R. Higonnet notes that, while Hardy does not allow Tess to remain totally passive, her "individual words are reductively interpreted through men's codes about women" (201). While we must credit Hardy's efforts to address the punitive consequences of a sexual double standard, Higonnet reminds us that "the autonomous selfhood and therefore voice of a literary character are always no more than useful fictions within the fiction" (198). She argues that Hardy uses a reflexively ironic narrator to grapple with the problem of a man telling a woman's story (199). Ironically, this very narrative commitment to Tess's story problematizes much of the representation. In one respect, then, Hardy's "passionate commitment to exhibiting Tess as the subject of her own experience evokes an unusually overt maleness in the narrative voice." Her suffering, focalized through the (male) narrator's gaze, raises uncomfortable questions about voyeurism. As Higonnet argues:

> The narrator's erotic fantasies of penetration and engulfment enact a pursuit, violation, and persecution of Tess in parallel with those she suffers at the hands of her two lovers. Time and again, the narrator seeks to enter Tess, through her eyes-- ... through her mouth-- ... and through her flesh... . The phallic imagery of pricking, piercing and penetration which has repeatedly been noted, serves not only to create an image-chain linking Tess's experiences from the death of Prince to her final penetrative act of retaliation, but also to satisfy the narrator's fascination with the interiority of her sexuality, and his desire to take possession of her. Similarly, the repeated

> evocations of a recumbent or somnolent Tess awakening to violence, and the continual interweaving of red and white, blood and flesh, sex and death, provide structuring images for the violence Tess suffers, but also repeat that violence. (120-21)

On the one hand, then, Hardy valiantly attempts to render sympathetically the injustice and suffering that are so integral a part of many working-class women's lives. But this attempt is undermined in part by the very 'realism' for which his representation has frequently been praised. Mitchell argues that Hardy's "world seems real, is recognizable, partly because it parallels the patriarchal world we know, especially in its tacit assumptions about gender. In particular, the narrator and implied reader of Hardy's texts share a gaze that is ineluctably male" (157).[40] As Boumelha notes, "the

[40]Mitchell's *The Stone and The Scorpion: The Female Subject of Desire in the Novels of Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy* offers a radical critique of Hardy's work. Making short shrift of critical attempts to negotiate a discomfort she identifies with a feminist reading of Hardy, she argues that "the narrator and the implied reader in all of Hardy's novels are invariably male, and sexist as well" (156). She goes so far as to say that "the pitying, protective narrator, in fact, so personally involved in his own creation, constitutes the voyeuristic consciousness in *Tess*" (193). Mitchell argues that "the entire text consists, on a deep level, of an act of objectification and violence toward its heroine ... Her 'guilt' (her irresistible sexuality) is established at the outset, and her punishment (her suffering and death) is reluctantly but pleasurably overseen by the wise and yearning narrator" (193). While I agree in many respects with Mitchell's argument, I do not think an aesthetic pleasure in the fallen woman's suffering is exclusively linked to a male gaze. As my readings of George Eliot and Elizabeth Gaskell demonstrate, the trope of the victimized woman is part of the desire to punish class transgression (a phenomenon in which middle-class women certainly participated) and evokes the erotics of punishment.

narrator's analytic omniscience is threatened both by his erotic commitment to Tess, and by the elusiveness of her sexuality" (128). Ultimately, "Hardy's effort to wrestle with the codes of masculinity and femininity ironically traps him in their repetition" (Higonnet 212).

Written specifically to satisfy the demands of a late Victorian audience already indoctrinated into the ideology of domesticity which writes out woman's sexual body, *Tess* shows us that this ideology's subtext never really allows woman to be anything *but* her body. Higonnet notes that Hardy's "language of incarnation is destabilised by the physicality and interiority of the 'woman's soul'" (121). Even the discourse which attempts to elevate woman's soul above her body ultimately collapses under the seemingly insurmountable obstacle of the (male) desire woman arouses. "If Tess can be said to have a tragic 'flaw', it is her sexuality, which is, in this novel, her 'nature' as a woman. Her sexuality is above all provocative: she is a temptress to the convert Alec, an Eve to Angel Clare" (Boumelha 123-4). Thus we see that narratives of purity cannot be purged of narratives of the woman's threatening sexual body. Tess's speech is assimilated "to her body and to nature" (Higonnet 204).[41] In fact, "Tess

[41]Boumelha notes that Tess's "consciousness is all but edited out" of Hardy's novel, "particularly at moments of such erotic response." Significantly, "Tess is asleep, or in reverie, at almost every crucial turn of the plot: at Princes' death, at the time of her seduction by Alec, when the sleep-walking Angel buries his image of her, at his return to find her at the Herons, and when the police take her at Stonehenge.

is most herself--and thus, most woman--at points where she is dumb and semi-conscious"--when she is, within the spirit/body bifurcation of the novel, most body and least "soul." "The tragedy of Tess Durbeyfield, like that in *The Return of the Native*, turns upon an ideological basis, projecting a polarity of sex and intellect, body and mind, upon an equally fixed polarity of gender. In this schema, sex and nature are assigned to the female, intellect and culture to the male" (Boumelha 121-22). Not only does woman's threatening sexual body underwrite discourses of domesticity, it provides a justification for the erotics of punishment fueling Victorian narratives of the victimized fallen woman. Narratives in which "fallen women" suffer beautifully aestheticize (and anaesthetize) women's suffering:

> In a physical sense, then, Tess is vividly and immediately present, to an extent that tends to obfuscate the fact that a key constituent of her subjectivity--what several critics have called her "interiority"--is missing ... At the heart of his novel so obviously "about" a woman, there is a blank space, an absent heroine. Its sense of felt life, so present and palpable, derives from the highly implicated narrator and his vividly realized erotic vision. Tess's "interior"--her consciousness, in other words--is deftly elided in a series of unobtrusive omissions. Most obviously, we are never told what she is thinking or feeling, even at key points in the novel (the seduction, the moment she discovers she is pregnant, the baby's birth, her execution). (Mitchell 190)

Important moments of speech are absent, too--her wedding-night account of her past life for example, or the 'merciless polemical syllogism,' learnt from Angel, with which she transforms Alec from evangelical preacher to sexual suitor once more" (121-22).

For example, just before Alec finally consummates his desire for Tess, he returns from surveying the countryside for landmarks ands finds her "sleeping soundly, and upon her eyelashes there lingered tears" (71). Tess's tears are as *beautiful* as they are *painful*. Her aestheticized physical body is overwhelmingly present and any representation of the *experience* of her pain noticeably *absent*. The degree to which she is conflated with the *physical* (and, by association in a bifurcated flesh/spirit world, the *animal*) is suggested in the syntactic confusion over Tess and Alec's horse:

> [Alec] had, in fact, ridden quite at random for over an hour, taking any turning that came to hand in order to prolong companionship with her, and giving far more attention to Tess's moonlit person than to any wayside object. A little rest for the jaded animal being desirable, he did not hasten his search for landmarks. (70)

We understand that "jaded animal" alludes to Alec's horse, who we know from an earlier reference to be tired. But syntactically, the referent is to Tess. That both Tess and Alec's horse are tired, that he muses about both as he wanders on his pleasurable moonlit journey, and that, finally, the need for both of them to rest provides the opportunity for Alec to rape Tess, suggests a too-easy movement between the horse's animal body and Tess' sexual body. What's more, at the moment of rape Tess is, as many critics have noted, asleep--dumb, unconscious, outside of language. The rape is represented in abstractions from the male narrator's point of view: "Why is it that upon this beautiful feminine tissue,

sensitive as gossamer, and practically blank as snow as yet, there should have been traced such a coarse pattern as it was doomed to receive?" (71). Furthermore, the narrative indulges in the fatalistic speculation that similar crimes committed by ancient d'Urbervilles are being reenacted with Tess. The narrator seemingly aligns himself with Tess when he writes: "Though to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children may be a morality good enough for divinities, it is scorned by average human nature; and it therefore does not mend the matter" (71). But, as Higonnet argues, "giving voice to the historian is one of the functions that splits the narrative voice asunder" (202). The pervasive references to the legend of the "coach and four," (a legend of a past d'Urberville's heinous crime), the constant association of woman with pagan superstition, impart an attitude which is "suggestively ambiguous, even split." "By introducing the superstitious sign *qua* sign and by shaping the turn of events, the narrator lends credence to the superstition" and "invites us to *read* through the code of superstition" (Higonnet 204).

We see a similar conflation in the scene describing Tess sheathing corn. This scene, focalized from the narrator's point of view, presents woman's body as part of the field. The narrator says that women are the "most interesting" field laborers:

> By reason of the charm which is acquired by a woman when she becomes part and parcel of outdoor nature, and is not merely an object set down therein as at ordinary times. A field-man is a personality

> afield; a field-woman is a portion of the field; she has somehow lost her own margin, imbibed the essence of her surrounding, and assimilated herself with it. (86)

The text presents us with the troubling observation that the laboring woman "seduces casual attention" (86). The implication is that, by virtue of her visible physical body, she *makes* men "look" at her. More troubling still, she loses her boundaries, becomes "part and parcel of outdoor nature." Thus suggests that, like the field, she is passively penetrable. Hardy describes the "penetration" of the field, which "had already been 'opened'; that is to say, a lane a few feet wide had been hand-cut through the wheat along the whole circumference of the field, for the first passage of the horses and machine" (85). "Opened," ready to "plow," the "field" is about to be transversed, penetrated, entered, written, by both horse and machine, old and new. We do not have to stretch Hardy's narrative far to read fantasies of woman's penetrable body in the fantasy of the "field-woman" who "has somehow lost her own margin" and "assimilated herself" with the field. But the sadistic quality of this conflation between woman/animal/earth is perhaps most clear in the scene describing Tess sheathing corn:

> Her binding proceeds with clock-like monotony. From the sheaf last finished she draws a handful of ears, patting their tips with her left palm to bring them even. Then stooping low she moves forward, gathering the corn with both hands against her knees, and pushing her left gloved hand under the bundle to meet the right on the other side, holding the corn in an embrace like that of a lover. She brings the ends of the bond together,

> and kneels on the sheaf while she ties it, beating back her skirts now and then lifted by the breeze. A bit of her naked arm is visible between the buff leather of the gauntlet and the sleeve of her gown; and as the day wears on its feminine smoothness becomes scarified by the stubble, and bleeds. (86-7)

This erotic scene--in which Tess "pats" the "tips" of the corn, "embraces" the sheaths like a "lover," beats back her lifted skirts--ends with her "naked arm" between the "buff leather of the gauntlet and the sleeve of her gown ... "scarified" and "bleed[ing]."

This erotic representation of a painful physical labor is uncomfortably close to an almost sadistic pleasure in sexual conquest. The detail given to her skin, dress, posture, and movement, and the close association of these with sexual activity, press upon us an awareness of the narrator's voyeuristic arousal by the events he narrates. But this fascination with Tess's sexuality also evokes a horror. This horror is indicated in the scene in which Tess stumbles upon Angel playing the harp. Again, the language of the scene is highly erotic. The music that draws Tess has "a stark quality like that of nudity" (121). Walking towards the notes, Tess finds herself in an uncultivated garden:

> Damp and rank with juicy grass which sent up mists of pollen at a touch; and with tall blooming weeds emitting offensive smells--weeds whose red and yellow and purple hues formed a polychrome as dazzling as that of cultivated flowers. She went stealthily as a cat through the profusion of growth, gathering cuckoo-spittle on her skirts, cracking snails that were underfoot, staining her hands with thistle-milk and slug-slime, and rubbing off upon her naked arms sticky blights which,

> though snow-white on the apple-tree trunks, made madder stains on her skin; thus she drew quite near to Clare, still unobserved of him. (121)

The eroticism of this passage is offset by a language of repulsiveness. The overgrown garden weeds emit "an offensive smell." And, while the noxious weeds *look* like "cultivated flowers," they are *not*. This suggests that appearances may be deceiving. What one thinks is a prize flower may turn out to be only a *common* weed, but an *uncontainable* and threateningly overgrowing one. Like the fears of being unable to differentiate "fallen" from "pure" women, and the corollary fears of sexual contagion, this passage evokes a horror of sexual *contamination*. Making her way through the garden to Alec, Tess *"gathers," "stains," and "rubs" herself* with "cuckoo spittle," "slug-slime," and "blights." In a novel marked by Tess's sexual *passivity*, this passage is striking for its suggestion of her as *actively* contaminating. The language of this passage makes Tess the agent of her own pollution. Further, "cuckoo-spittle" evokes images of cuckoldry, of Tess as a fallen women, adulterous, unfaithful. It is this overgrown damp rankness of vegetable ferment through which Tess makes her way and to which she becomes virtually assimilated before she reaches Angel.

Like Adam and Eve (128), Angel and Tess writhe "feverishly under the oppressiveness of an emotion thrust on them by cruel Nature's law" (144). While Tess is presented as part of the field, assimilated to the sexual and dangerously

staining garden, Angel is presented as "more spiritual than animal; he had himself well in hand, and was singularly free from grossness" (189). His love was "ethereal to a fault, imaginative to impractability" (240). He has "the will to subdue the grosser to the subtler emotion, the substance to the conception, the flesh to the spirit" (241). Though Angel *does* resist his desire for Tess, ultimately he succumbs to the "force of nature." Regardless of whether or not Tess is *conscious* of her sexual "power," she *does* elicit desire. The desire she elicits is presented as dangerous, something which has the potential to ruin both Angel and Alec. This danger is suggested in a curious passage describing woman's "soul" as incarnate in her sexual flesh. Angel finds Tess on that border between sleep and waking:

> Yawning, and he saw the red interior of her mouth as if it had been a snake's. She had stretched one arm so high above her coiled-up cable of hair that he could see its satin delicacy above the sunburn; her face was flushed with sleep, and her eyelids hung heavy over their pupils. The brim-fullness of her nature breathed from her. It was a moment when a woman's soul is more incarnate than at any other time; when the most spiritual beauty bespeaks itself flesh; and sex takes the outside place in the presentation. (166)

This passage collapses Tess's spirituality into her sexuality (a collapse impossible to imagine for either Angel or Alec). She is perilously close to the Lamia, the snake-woman who appears in the guise of innocent maidenhood and seduces and then devours men.

To a certain extent, then, the narrative eroticizes the suffering of the fallen woman and evokes the fear of sexual contamination and engulfment. It is precisely the moments at which the narrative seems most sympathetic to Tess that it is most voyeuristically aroused. Mitchell argues that "on the surface, one obvious function Tess's suffering serves is purely aesthetic: she suffers beautifully, nobly, and in great detail recounted by the observing, sorrowing narrator" (194). At the center of the novel is an:

> Absent subject, and the desire the book exudes is not Tess's's but the (male) narrator's ... What makes Tess so erotic is in fact its complex conformity to the domination/submission fantasy ... a conformity that shares to an uncomfortable degree the pathological appeal of much male pornography. The look, the language and the enactment of desire in the tale of Hardy's milkmaid, despite its compelling heroine, ultimately do not belong to her. (188)

Just as Tess is a palpably present external body lacking interiority or self-reflexivity, so too her access to language (and the subject position of the performative utterance) is subsumed to the dominating figures in her life. Both Alec's and Angel's "oral arts" are set against Tess's silence in a sort of "communion between the two men over Tess's body that suggests the type of homosocial relationship Eve Sedgewick has analyzed" (Mitchell 210). In this construction, woman is the sexual body, absolutely denied access to the word. As Julia Kristeva in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* explains it, "a (social) symbolic system *corresponds* to a specific structuration of the speaking subject in the *symbolic order*."

The *symbolic order* implies "the dependence and articulation of the speaking subject in the order of language" (67). In Victorian narratives of the fall, woman *is* body, without access to the word and therefore without access to the symbolic order. What is more, she is filthy, defiling, and "defilement is what is jettisoned from the symbolic system" (65). Access to the word and hence to the symbolic order is requisite to truth-value and legal right. In Bourdieu's terms, the performative utterance involves the power of the word, and, as pure body, pure sex, the seduced maiden completely lacks the power of the performative utterance. She is presented as *written* by Angel and Alec: Alec has written Tess's body with his; Angel scripts Tess's words, which are never her own but only a mimicking of his. As Alec tells her: "The fact is, whatever your dear husband believed you accept, and whatever he rejected you reject, without the least inquiry or reasoning on your own part. That's just like you women. Your mind is enslaved to his" (315).

We see the extent to which Tess is denied access to the word in Angel's refusal to hear her confession.[42] Her word,

[42]One might argue that, first writing and then speaking her past, Tess gains access to the word. She does, after all, finally tell her story. But Tess's confession is modeled "on the renunciation of one's own will and of one's own self" (Foucault *Technologies* 48). Through her confession, Tess becomes the penitent enacting an "*exomologesis*, or a dramatic expression" of the sinner. "In *exomologesis*, the sinner had to 'kill' himself through ascetic macerations. Whether through martyrdom or through obedience to a master, disclosure of self is the renunciation of one's own self" (48). Tess's

even when written, is invisible. The confession letter she slips under Angel's door disappears under the carpet, unread. The narrative does present Angel's inability to conceive of Tess as having a "story" of her "past" as his shortcoming. It also condemns the sexual double standard which makes him unable to accept Tess's past once she reveals it. Nevertheless, the narrative remains within the structure in which the only "story" a woman with a "past" can tell is the story of her sexual guilt. If she has no *story*, she has no access to the *word*. If she *has* a past, a story, she must be fallen, and the only mode in which that story may be narrated is the confessional. To *confess* means both to acknowledge the sin of her fall and to accept her penance. The only word woman can speak, then, is the word that authorizes her punishment for sexual transgression.

The Victorian genre of the confession and the erotics of punishment it evokes are central organizing structures in *Tess*. Kalikoff argues that "the sexual confession drives the novel's classical cycle of retribution and transcendence" ("Sexual Confessions" 107). While Kalikoff articulates the role of the confessional in Victorian social discourse and describes it as "an emotional strip-tease that indicts the voyeurs" (101), she exempts Hardy from the role of voyeur and sees him instead as indicting "religious and legal

confession, then, fully jettisons her from the symbolic order.

institutions by revealing their inhumane complicity in Tess's destruction" (109-10). While Hardy certainly intended to indict these institutions, and while he successfully does so in many ways, the text ultimately participates in the same voyeuristic strip-tease Kalikoff identifies and Hardy intends to critique. It is not just that, in order to maintain her tragic heroine status, Tess must suffer--all tragic heroes/heroines suffer. Hardy's complicity in sexual voyeurism lies partly in the fact that, had Tess at any moment been represented as *choosing* Alec, as choosing comfort and ease over her suffering penitence, she would no longer be the tragic heroine. It is precisely *because* she is the continually exploited, the sexually abused, the *victim*, that Angel *can* return for her.

Despite Tess's suffering, Kalikoff attempts to secure for Tess the status of tragic heroine. She argues that Tess "rejects man-made laws in favor of her own inner laws. In the course of her journey, she reshapes her understanding of spiritual law as her experience and intuition dictate. She denies the patriarchal authority of church as well as state" ("Sexual Confession" 108). This is partially true of Tess in relation to her child, Sorrow (she angrily rejects the minister's refusal to baptize him and performs this ceremony herself). But Tess's ritual baptism and burial nevertheless remain outside of the symbolic order. Her actions are not consistent enough to be seen as an *alternative* to the order

she rejects. And, in fact, her acceptance of herself as more truly Alec's wife than Angel's ultimately leaves her within the patriarchal authority of church and state. But, more tellingly, Tess's murder of Alec, far from being the "enactment of her own justice" (Kalikoff "Sexual Confession" 110), is her final *submission* to the patriarchal code that demands the sacrifice of the fallen woman. The moment of apotheosis in which Tess achieves her final blissful union with Angel cannot be complete while Alec is still alive. Tess kills Alec, a murder that was set in motion when Angel, before leaving for South America, said, "How can we live together while that man lives?--he being your husband in Nature, and not I. If he were dead it might be different..." (239). Angel wishes Alec dead, which is also wishing his other half, the struggle of his flesh, dead. When Angel finds Tess, she kills Alec, acting out Angel's desire and literally giving her life for him. Tess tells Angel:

> It came to me as a shining light that I should get you back that way. I could not bear the loss of you any longer--you don't know how entirely I was unable to bear your not loving me! Say you do now, dear, dear husband; say you do, now I have killed him. (377)

Peculiarly, Angel tells Tess: "I do love you, Tess--O, I do--it is all come back!" (377). If Angel's love has just "come back," what *brought it back* to him? Certainly, Angel's return from South America was motivated by his understanding that, in rejecting Tess for adultery, he was being hypocritical. But it is not until Tess has killed Alec that "tenderness was

absolutely dominant in Clare at last. He kissed her endlessly with his white lips, and held her hand, and said--'I will not desert you! I will protect you by every means in my power, dearest love, whatever you may have done or not have done!'" (378). But Alec's death is a suicide-murder. Tess knowingly accepts the death sentence killing Alec entails. She is, of course, apprehended and hung for the crime of murdering Alec. She tells Angel: "I do not wish to outlive your present feeling for me. I would rather not. I would rather be dead and buried when the time comes for you to despise me" (382). The narrative presents Tess's and Angel's reunion and her suicide-murder as Tess's fulfillment, but it seems more clearly to represent the sadistic porno-fantasy fulfillment in which Tess is the happy-slave-to-Angel before she sacrifices herself to him. In the closing scenes, Tess places herself on the sacrificial altar and asks Angel to marry Liza-Lu. With Angel and Liza-Lu. watching, Tess is hung. Liza-Lu, "the spiritualized image of Tess," is the woman stripped of sexuality (389). The project of domesticating working-class women *requires* that, as with their middle-class counterparts, their sexuality be rewritten as maternal devotion devoid of passion or desire. This rewriting elevates the spirit over the flesh, the angel over the whore, and converts the sexually dangerous woman into the maternal domestic woman who labors in the service of the modern family and state. The domestication

of working-class women thus requires the death of the sexual woman, a *murder* which is eroticized and aestheticized.

Sex and the Modern Family

The revisions Hardy made in order to publish *Tess* clearly position his heroine as a working-class woman trying to live out the ideology of middle-class domesticity. Tess has completed a sixth standard education at the village school, where "she had held a leading place at the time of her leaving" (31). While the narrative presents this fact with some irony, it is nevertheless clear that this education is part of the divide between Tess and her mother. Joan is from an older time, a Jacobean leftover out of place in the modern era:

> Between the mother, with her fast-perishing lumber of superstitions, folk-lore, dialect, and orally transmitted ballads, and the daughter, with her trained National teachings and Standard knowledge under an infinitely revised Code, there was a gap of two hundred years as ordinarily understood. When they were together the Jacobean and the Victorian ages were juxtaposed. (17)

Tess's susceptibility to seduction is blamed in large part on Joan's failure to prepare her for her place as "proper" wife and mother. Alec remarks that "it is a shame for parents to bring up their girls in such dangerous ignorance of the gins and nets that the wicked may set for them, whether their motive be a good one or the result of simple indifference" (309). Her father drinks and does not provide for the household. Her mother (who also drinks) does not school Tess

in the norms of middle-class marriage and domestic economy. Of course Joan, the Jacobean holdover, does not share the new age's paradigm of the domestic woman and thus *cannot* impart this paradigm to Tess. Joan is, according to nineteenth-century definitions, an inadequate mother. The family is poor, she does not sufficiently direct or control her drunkard husband, the laundry is never done, and she leaves the children in order to find her husband. In short, the Durbeyfields are the culpable poor:

> If the heads of the Durbeyfield house-hold chose to sail into difficulty, disaster, starvation, disease, degradation, death, thither were these half-dozen little captives under hatches compelled to sail with them--six helpless creatures, who had never been asked if they wished for life on any terms, much less if they wished for it on such hard conditions as were involved in being of the shiftless house of Durbeyfield. (18)

Joan falls far short of the domestic model of maternal love and supervision. But even without a good mother to educate her about and equip her to deal with the dilemmas that face her in the modern world, Tess nevertheless has a knowledge of the new paradigm for womanhood in the Victorian age (she has, after all, been schooled). She has internalized the new age's paradigm of the domestic woman, a paradigm linking "good" women to state-sanctioned marriage, "legitimate" motherhood and efficient and economic regulation of the household. Tess "felt quite a Malthusian towards her mother for thoughtlessly giving her so many little sisters and brothers" (31). Next to Tess's attempts to regulate her

sexual (re)production, Joan is unregulated reproduction, the endlessly reproducing sexual body. It is Tess who, with her "deputy maternal attitude," bears the burden of domesticity. Tess finishes the wash, cares for the children, figures out how to provide money for the family. Joan's failure as a mother marks the shift from a rural/agrarian working-class family structure to an urban industrial one.

Hardy's moralizing narrative makes Joan and the Durbeyfield family responsible for their living. They are not sufficiently industrious, and industry, in the industrial city, is the new religion. Completely devoid of a modern work ethic, Joan, who consults the *Fortune Teller* and waits for providence to provide for her, sees life as a series of chance occurrences which "come upon them irrespective of desert or folly" (253). While Tess believes that she must work for the bare necessities of a life that is both constructed by and constrained to her labor, Joan imagines Providence providing luxuries and social status irrespective of her labor or her station. In Joan's mind, it is perfectly plausible that Tess will marry up, that her sojourn at what she believes to be their related d'Urbervilles will culminate in a good match for Tess. While Joan can find this a perfectly plausible scenario, Tess cannot. Even as Joan is plotting marriage scenarios for Tess, Tess tells Joan "don't go thinking about [Mrs. d'Urberville] making a match for me--it is silly" (30). What's more, Joan sees no real problem with Tess's pregnancy.

It is quite plausible to Joan that Alec will marry Tess when he learns that she is pregnant. Discussing with her husband the possible dangers of Tess's removal to Trantridge, Joan says:

> 'Well, 'tis a chance for the maid-- Still, if 'twere the doing again, I wouldn't let her go till I had found out whether the gentleman is really a good-hearted young man and choice over her as his kinswoman.'
>
> 'Yes, you ought, perhaps, to ha' done that,' snored Sir John.
>
> Joan Durbeyfield always managed to find consolation somewhere: 'Well, as one of the genuine stock, she ought to make her way with 'em, if she plays her trump card aright. And if he don't marry her afore he will after. For that he's all afire wi' love for her any eye can see.'
>
> 'What's her trump card? Her d'Urberville blood, you mean?'
>
> 'No, stupid; her face--as 'twas mine.' (47)

In Joan's paradigm, marrying up in class, premarital sex, and pregnancy before marriage are facts of life that, far from marking a woman's ruin, might even work strategically to secure her a desirable match. And seduction is an appropriate strategy for securing a good marriage. But Tess is of the Victorian, not the Jacobean, age. In the Victorian age, cross-class marriages, pre-marital sex and pregnancy mark a woman as fallen. And the fallen woman must, of course, suffer.

There are several ways in which *Tess* performs the ideological work of inculcation in which fallenness becomes a trope with which to police working-class family structures. In the first place, unlike her mother, Tess cannot easily

imagine for herself a cross-class marriage.[43] As Langland argues, "the story of the heroine who secures her master's hand in marriage, in fact, disappears from the novel ... the classes do not intermarry in nineteenth-century fiction" (1). While Joan laments that, after discovering her pregnancy, Tess did not secure Alec in marriage, Tess believes that, whether or not she was pregnant, Alec *would not* have married her: "Get Alec d'Urberville in the mind to marry her! He marry *her*! On matrimony he had never once said a word. And what if he had? How a convulsive snatching at social salvation might have impelled her to answer him she could not say" (80). Tess is a tragic heroine in part because she does not use her ability to elicit Alec's desire or her pregnancy to entrap him into marriage. She is a *good* woman because she refuses to consider marriage as a means of upward social mobility and privileges "love," the basis of companionate marriage. To the middle class, working-class women's desire for middle-class status is threatening. To the extent that Tess readily

[43]Though Angel's arguments eventually persuade Tess to marry him, despite their class difference, this marriage does in fact *fail*. The failure is in large part due to the differences between working- and middle-class sexual mores. Indeed, the narrator describes Angel's surprise at the "unreserved comradeship out of doors" during their betrothal, which, though it seemed "normal" to the dairy-hands, seemed "oddly anticipative" to him (190). Similarly, after Angel rejects her because of her affair with Alec, Tess argues that other husbands have gotten over such things. Angel responds: "Different societies, different manners. You almost make me say you are an unapprehending peasant woman, who have never been initiated into the proportions of social things. You don't know what you say" (228).

accepts her working-class status and does not desire upward social mobility, the narrative constructs her sympathetically. Tess's plight is tragic, not criminal, precisely because she expresses no desire to convulsively "snatch" at "social salvation." By presenting a heroine reconciled to a working-class identity, Hardy's text participates in disseminating the ideology of working-class domesticity.[44] The text acknowledges the novel's role in disseminating such cultural "information." In response to Joan's accusation that she "ought to have been more careful" if she "didn't mean to get [Alec] to make [her] his wife," an agonized Tess responds:

> O mother, my mother! ... How could I be expected to know? I was a child when I left this house four months ago. Why didn't you tell me there was danger in men-folk? Why didn't you warn me? Ladies know what to fend hands against, because they read novels that tell them of these tricks; but I never had the chance o' learning in that way, and you did not help me! (80)

Novels, then, "teach" women "what to fend hands against." The narrative repetition of the fallen woman's suffering *is* in fact both a definition of the fall (what constitutes the fall? Who will suffer?) and a discursive punishment of

[44]At one level, Tess's desire for and marriage to Angel problematize the argument that Tess is reconciled to a working-class identity. But the narrative representation of the marriage's failure and the suffering it entails makes a stronger case against cross-class marriages than the representation of the marriage can make for them. These boundaries again seem to be troubled by the Angel/Liza-Lu relationship. But Liza-Lu's primary function is to signify the erasure of working-class women's sexuality. In this sense, she, too, is part of the work of domesticating working-class women.

fallenness. The narrative certainly does pity the victim it constructs, but this pity is contingent upon the victim passively accepting, even embracing, her suffering. The narrative does *not* pity Joan, who *does* desire upward mobility and for whom sex can be a tactic in acquiring this.

Tess also relies upon the domestic ideal of romantic love to restructure working-class families according to the middle-class paradigm. The "romance plot ... firmly grounded within a patriarchal tradition," "[mystifies] class relations and class management" (Langland 22). The romance plot disseminated the myth that "despite the vast inequities of the age virtually anyone could find gratification within this private framework" (Armstrong 48). Part of the "gratification" the home offers is *family*. The nursing mother was an icon of the domestic woman ideology. The fallen woman, however--the woman whose sexuality transgresses the boundaries of legitimate marriage and domestic home--cannot be a good mother. As Ruth Perry describes it in "Colonizing the Breast," "admiration for mother--and for maternal devotion--came to be a banner under which the newly constituted middle-class marched" (117). Within this discourse, "motherhood sanctified women and removed from them the taint of sexuality" (118). But *illegitimate* children are, within this discursive production, the badge of sexuality, not of sanctified motherhood. Tess's child marks her as a fallen woman and, within the Victorian ideology of domesticity, a failed mother.

One of the tragic aspects of this novel is Tess's attempt to be the "good" domestic mother in spite of the conditions which doom her attempt to failure. Unlike Ruth, she has no one to "teach" her how to be a mother or to support her in her efforts. But, unlike Hetty, she *tries* to care for her child. As the passage depicting Tess's attempt to nurture her child while working in the fields shows, "mothering" according to middle-class standards is a learned skill:

> When the infant had taken its fill the young mother sat it upright in her lap, and looking into the far distance dandled it with a gloomy indifference that was almost dislike; then all of a sudden she fell to violently kissing it some dozens of times, as if she could never leave off, the child crying at the vehemence of an onset which strangely combined passionateness with contempt. (88)[45]

Here we see that Tess cannot achieve a proper balance with her child. She moves between "gloomy indifference," "violent kissing," "passionateness" and "contempt." Despite her best

[45]Higonnet argues that Tess's "preverbal communication with the preverbal Sorrow links the woman's sexual and linguistic roles in a quite traditional way. More interestingly, it also mirrors the mixture of sexual passion and contempt that disfigured her relationship to Alec. Furthermore, Tess's violence here evokes a particular form of 'maternal anger' not often recognized in literature written by men. Hers is certainly the anger of the repressed voice, but it is also the anger of the exploited body, of a maternity whose pleasures have been fatally contaminated by rape" (206). I am interested in Higonnet's discussion of maternal anger. While Higonnet sees one aspect of this anger as "maternal pleasures" "contaminated by rape," I question the class-bias of reading maternity as "pleasurable." In fact, Tess's body is "exploited" as much by the labor demands of working-class motherhood as by Alec raping her. As chapter Five shows, middle-class ideals of family and motherhood were markedly different than working-class reality. Higonnet seems to accept a bourgeois ideology of maternity that I want to critique.

efforts, she cannot regulate her emotion, her desire, or her actions. By implication, then, she cannot regulate her own (and thus her mate's) sexuality. The regulation of sexuality is one of the domestic woman's primary duties. The pathos of Tess's failure to perform this duty is highlighted by her *desire* to do so. She accepts the ideology of domesticity, but it is impossible for her to meet its demands:

> Increasingly constructed as the higher good for which a woman must be prepared to sacrifice her sexual vanity, motherhood began to carry with it the suggestion of punitive consequences for sexual activity. If fictional women characters of the previous era had mated and bred casually--like Moll Flanders--maternity was now becoming a serious duty and responsibility. (Perry 118)

The discourse of motherhood, the foundation of companionate marriage, helped to reappropriate "female subjectivity for the sake of a new cultural discourse, which separated public from private, political from personal, and market relations from domestic relations" (Perry 119). Perry describes this "psychological appropriation of women to serve the emotional needs of men" as "a colonization far more thorough-going than any that had preceded it" (118-19). In fact, "the medical focus on maternal breast-feeding can be interpreted as the beginning of the physiological colonization of women's bodies corresponding to the psychological colonization of women's subjectivity in both companionate marriage and motherhood" (Perry 121).

The novel, by disseminating a discourse of purity, maternity, and domesticity, played a crucial role in

domesticating working-class women. These fictional narratives *defined* fallenness, *warned* against the suffering "falling" entailed, and *discursively punished* fallen women. The primary tenets for the domestic working-class woman clearly emerge in the pages of popular fiction: do not transgress class boundaries; and seek legitimate marriage to an industrious worker of one's own class. This domesticating project was vitally important to restructuring working-class family and sexual relations for the economic requirements of the industrial city. But, as we shall see in chapter Four, it was *as* important to the preservation of middle-class domesticity as it was to the construction of the new worker-state.

CHAPTER 4
THE "OTHER WOMAN'S" SHADOW:
DOUBLING FALLENNESS AS NARRATIVE FRAME

"Love of Finery" and the "Fall"

Popular discourses painted pictures of working-class women whose love of finery made them susceptible to the temptations of upper-class seducers. As I have already argued with the case of Hetty Sorrel, this discourse implicitly links a love of finery to a consciousness of beauty and a desire to exercise the power to attract afforded by displaying one's beauty. This discourse sexualizes the desire to dress above one's station, marking working-class women who indulged in ostentatious displays of dress as seductresses.[46] Sexualizing

[46]As Mariana Valverde points out in "The Love of Finery: Fashion and the Fallen Woman in Nineteenth-Century Social Discourse," William Acton uses discourses of women's love of finery to unite the paradoxical beliefs in women's asexual natures with women's sale of their sexual services. According to Acton:

> Uncontrollable sexual desires of her own play but a little part in inducing profligacy of the female ... If I seek to number the operative causes other than passion of the women, I am met on the very threshold of the task by vanity, vanity, and then vanity--for what but this are love of dress and admiration, and what sacrifices will not tens of thousands of the uneducated make to gain these? (qtd. Valverde 175).

This discourse does not, as Valverde points out, interrogate "the system of meaning that linked women's desire for clothes to vice, venereal disease, and urban decay."

the display of dress masks fears of class transgression by constructing working-class women's desire for luxury as a moral transgression. Paradoxically, popular medical discourses disavowed women's sexual responsiveness. If women were not supposed to *experience* sexual desire, then their ability to *elicit* desire must be the ground upon which working-class women's ostentatious display was sexualized. Sexualizing working-class women's love of finery, then, punishes working-class women for eliciting sexual desire from men--specifically, for eliciting sexual desire from middle- and upper-class men, for whom working-class women were *inappropriate* objects of desire (or, at least, inappropriate *wives*, a fact which made even casual relationships between the classes anxiety producing). It is thus not simply that a love of finery marks working-class women as susceptible to temptation by middle and upper-class seducers; it is, more importantly, that their display arouses desire and seduces men for whom they should not be objects of desire.

Mariana Valverde points to the "simultaneous stability and instability of dress as a social and moral signifier" (172). The social semiotics of dress indicated not only "degrees of virtue and vice, but also degrees of leisure and labor" (183). Thus the anxiety fueling the love of finery discourse was fueled by the anxiety of category. As McClintock argues, "sumptuary panic (boundary panic over clothing) erupts most intensely during periods of social

turbulence" (174). Significantly, the new consumerism of the late Victorian market increasingly made categorization more and more difficult. This consumerism was manifest in the proliferation of both goods and of jobs. The new categories of women's work (and the new categories of *men's* work and avenues of wealth) in the industrial economy were difficult to assimilate into old classifications of social position. It was no longer clear if women shop owners were working or middle class, if milliners' assistants were of the same class as factory girls or domestic servants, or how the late-Victorian rise of the secretary ranked next to the old governesses. Additionally, the anonymity of single women in an urban economy made it impossible to gauge a woman's respectability through her extended familial relations. Previously, a woman's relations had provided both supervision and an indication of her community and social standing. The relative anonymity of single women alone in an urban industrial economy made it increasingly difficult to know if women were working-class, upper working-class, lower middle-class, pure or impure, virtuous or fallen. While it is true that *work* itself marked a woman by her class, it is also true that, within the working-classes, new levels of hierarchies were being distinguished. The upper levels of the working-classes (those who were prosperous enough to display the *signs* of middle-class identity) were uncomfortably close to the lower middle class. What's more, when women were *not* working

(when they were dressed for the theater or the music hall, for shopping or leisure), their public dress did not necessarily have to reflect their working identity. Thus, "while the starving seamstresses of mid-Victorian literature had been portrayed as objects of pity and charity, the maids, factory women and new clerical workers of the later Victorian urban world were commonly portrayed as sexual and moral dangers to the city." At one level "all working women could be perceived as threatening the moral order of the bourgeois city, if only because of their immoral consumption" (Valverde 184). More threatening still, they could *appear* to be something other than what they *were*. Clothing was an increasingly less reliable indicator of class position than it previously had been:

> Sumptuary laws contain an internal paradox, for the fact that class and rank are made legible by the wearing, or not wearing, of "cloth of gold, silk or purple" reveals the invented nature of social distinction, throwing into visibility the question of both the origins and the legitimacy of rank and power. The bits and pieces of colored cloth that are the legible insignia of degree are also permanently subject to disarrangement and symbolic theft. For this reason, the historical figure of the cross-dresser becomes invested with a potent and subversive power. (McClintock 174)

Like *Adam Bede, Mary Barton* and *David Copperfield* are examples of the ways in which sumptuary panic informs discourses of fallenness and articulates the anxiety underlying the legitimacy of rank and power and the fluidity of category boundaries. In both novels, fallenness is doubled. One fallen woman strategically frames the narrative

progress of another, acting as both a warning against and a symbolic punishment for falling. The fallen woman is a threat to both working and middle-class homes. By refusing domestication, she destroys the working-class home: she prevents husbands and sons from working and contaminates daughters with the desire for clothing, comfort, and leisure (the insignia of the middle class), hence ruining them as good working-class domestic women. She destroys the middle-class home by ensnaring husbands and sons, infecting them with lust and venereal disease, and stealing men from middle-class women. The domesticated working-class woman is thus crucial both to the economic order of the industrial state and to the cult of domesticity formed around middle-class households. Her work allows, as McClintock argues, housework to be made invisible and women's labor to be taken out of the rational market--in fact, she allows the fiction of the leisured domestic woman to exist.

Mary Barton

Like *Adam Bede's*, *Mary Barton's* narrative of seduction relies heavily on the discourses of the love of finery. Just before her fatal disappearance, Esther, the fallen woman par excellence of the Victorian novel, was seen dressed "in her Sunday gown, and with a new ribbon in her bonnet, and gloves on her hands, like the lady she was so fond of thinking herself" (5). She spent her money in dress, thinking to set

off her pretty face; and got to come home so late at night, that at last" John told her his mind: "Esther, I see what you'll end at with your artificials, and your fly-away veils, and stopping out when honest women are in their beds; you'll be a street-walker, Esther, and then, don't you go to think I'll have you darken my door" (6). Esther, then, is to blame for her fall: her vanity, her desire to be a lady, and the power she can exercise with her beauty mark her as the seductress guilty of a class transgression resignified as moral transgression and complicit in her own ruin. Mary, too, is implicated as a seductress. She was proud "of having attracted" Harry Carson," one so far above herself in station; not insensible to the secret pleasure of knowing that he, whom so many admired, had often said he would give anything for one of her sweet smiles" (133). She "had begun to fix a stern value to money as the 'Purchaser of Life'" (134). She had "visions of the future, where yet her thoughts dwelt more on the circumstances of ease, and the pomps and vanities awaiting her, than on the lover with whom she was to share them" (133).

Thus, while Harry *does* try to "seduce" Mary, this seduction is configured around Mary's desire for class status and her ability to elicit desire. Harry *can* seduce Mary because she is predisposed to seduction. He *wants* to seduce Mary because she has elicited his desire, i.e., she has solicited his seduction. He is constructed as "the tempter" (271) who will pay "any price" to have her, though he of

course would try to "obtain her as cheaply as he could" (157). But it is Mary whose "loveliness, vanity, ambition, [and] desire of being admired" expose her to the Harry's temptations. While Harry "never undeceived" Mary of her "ignorance to believe his intentions honorable" (157), he also had "repeatedly before led her to infer that marriage was not [his] object" (161). Mary, then, is as culpable in her own potential fall as is her would-be seducer. She is, as Mrs. Wilson calls her, a "bad hussy, with ... great blue eyes and yellow hair, to lead men on to ruin" (266). She is "the Delilah," a "vile flirting quean (sic)" (267).

As an explanatory narrative, the fall by the love of finery marks the instability of class signifiers. The need to mark the class boundary between Harry and Mary is all the more pressing *because* of its tenuousness: Harry, like Alec, is first generation middle-class, new money. Mary's relation to Harry exposes the fragility of his middle-class identity. Harry's mother was, after all, "a factory girl" (161). But, as Harry explains to Sally Ledbetter, when Mr. and Mrs. Carson married, his "father was in much such a station; at any rate, there was not the disparity there is between Mary and me" (161-2). The possibility that Mary may obtain the signifiers of class (either falsely, masquerading, as does Esther, as middle class, or legitimately, by marrying Harry) exposes the means by which the middle class has appropriated privilege and power. They, too, rose from the ranks, and their newly

acquired class status and power still sits loosely upon them. On what basis, then, are the Carsons really *different* from the Bartons? Prohibitions against cross-class marriages correspond to the possibility that the middle class may lose its newly acquired class privilege: the middle class subjects may fall--may lose money, power, middle-class identity. As with all boundary constructions, the need to draw rigid class boundary lines is as much about keeping the middle class *in* as it is about keeping others out. "The function of all magical boundaries ... [is] to stop those who are inside, on the right side of the line, from leaving, demeaning or down-grading themselves" (Bourdieu 122). Boundary issues for the Victorian middle class were extremely crucial as they were differentiating themselves both from the old aristocracy, with whom they were engaged in a struggle over control of the institutions of state and power, and from the new working classes, with whom they were also engaged in a struggle over the institutions of industry and capital and the conditions of labor. The middle class "defined itself as different from the aristocracy and the working classes, who spent, sexually and economically, without moderation and who preferred not to work" (McClintock 100).

Fallen women thus threaten the stability of class boundaries. They threaten working-class homes with their inability to raise children; those they do not kill will be ruined for proper work. Their sons will be shiftless agents

of moral disorder--thieves, rabble-rousers, chartists--and their daughters will be seductresses, agents of physical and moral contagion. Their husbands will be unemployed drunkards. By not (re)producing good workers for the state, fallen women threaten industry and the English nation. In short, fallen women threaten the economy of working- and middle-class homes, England's industrial and domestic economies, and the military-industrial imperial economy. Fears of fallen women's contagion and social disruption legitimated a series of legal and medical measures to control women's sexuality. "Controlling women's sexuality, exalting maternity and breeding a virile race of empire-builders were widely perceived as the paramount means for controlling the health and wealth of the male imperial body politic, so that, by the turn of the century, sexual purity emerged as a controlling metaphor for racial, economic and political power" (McClintock 47).

The Fall as Narrative Frame

Esther is the fallen woman next to whom Mary's actions are read. As Anderson argues, she occupies a "dual status as social victim and story" (118) and "her character conjoins romance and social realism" (123). As story, Esther is the warning of what the transgressive working-class woman will become: the outcast whore. Esther is the stereotypical melodramatic literary representation of the woman fallen to

ambition and vanity: she loves above her class, is abandoned, suffers, sells herself, endures the prolonged agony of her miserable life until, finally, the death she longs for releases her from the prison of her life. She says that it is "better to die than to live to lead such a life as I do" (191). This fallen-woman plot frames *Mary Barton*: the novel opens with the chapter "A Mysterious Disappearance," an allusion to her fall, and closes with her death. While this is a retrospective story framing the narrative, the specific moments of that story are revealed in bits and pieces, by implication. The dialogic revelation of Esther's fall comes during a May holiday on which the Wilson and Barton families are enjoying the outdoors. Out of their wives' hearing, Mr. Wilson asks John Barton about Esther, and John replies: "My mind is, she's gone off with somebody" (5). Esther was last seen by her landlady, Mrs. Bradshaw, "dressed in her Sunday gown, and with a new ribbon in her bonnet, and gloves on her hands, like the lady she was so fond of thinking herself" (5). John attributes Esther's fall to the "sad snare" of her beauty, from which she was "so puffed up, that there was no holding her in" (6), and her work in a factory, which enabled her to indulge her vanity: "That's the worst of factory work for girls. They can earn so much when work is plenty, that they can maintain themselves any how" (6).

Esther does not appear in the story until long after her discursive introduction, and, when she does appear, it is as

the suicidal prostitute whose tragic trajectory makes her desire death above all things. Esther, who succumbs to the dangers of the factory and the streets, who seeks her fortune with her officer lover, suffers terribly before her pitiful death. She enters the text to warn, first John (by whom she is repulsed), and then Jem, of Mary's relation to Harry Carson and her imminent peril of falling. When she appears, she is "hopeless, so abandoned by all living things, "and dreads "the averted eye, the altered voice, the infernal loathing" which knowledge of her prostitution would bring (281). She is the animal body whose "animal state of mind and body clashed jarringly on the peacefulness of the day" (317). At the end of her short but tragic career, she wishes to be "faraway in the country [so that] she could steal aside and die in a copse, or a clough, like the wild animals; but here the police would let no one alone in the streets, and she wanted a spot to die in, in peace" (461). Finally, in the classic Victorian style, Esther comes to her old home, "a white face pressed against the panes on the outside, gazing intently into the dusky chamber" (462). When Jem and Mary rush outside, they find Esther "fallen into what appeared simply a heap of white or light-coloured clothes, fainting or dead," the "poor crushed Butterfly--the once innocent Esther" (462). "She had come (as a wounded deer drags its heavy limbs once more to the green coolness of the lair in which it was born, there to

die), to see the place familiar to her innocence, yet once again before her death" (462).

Anderson argues that "the character of Esther ... constitutes ... the conflation of romantic melodrama and the real" (115). As such, John's first allusion to Esther contains this entire melodramatic story of the fallen woman. Even before the narrative unfolds *Esther's history*, we know what her fate will be. We do not, however, know what *Mary's* fate will be. Mary's development occurs in Esther's shadow. The pivotal tension in the novel is whether or not Mary, too, will fall. When Mary must go to work, John says "the factory" is "out of the question." The factory, as we have seen, predisposes women to the fall by virtue of paying them enough to allow them to indulge their vanity in ribbons and fine clothes. As Gagnier argues, "Gaskell attributed most social evil to the destruction of family life under the factory system" (105). "There were," then, "two things open--going out to service, and the dressmaking business" (26). (Ironically, the dress-maker learns how to fashion elegant clothing, thus giving her access to the signifiers of the upper-class.) While the dress-making business appears to be the lesser of two evils, even this venture is fraught with peril. Esther's fall is attributed, in part, to the perils of work outside the home, and she fears Mary, too, will succumb to similar dangers:

> I found out Mary went to learn dressmaking, and I began to be frightened for her; for it's a bad life

> for a girl to be out late at night in the streets, and after many an hour of weary work, they're ready to follow after any novelty that makes a little change. (190)

Esther's fears are, in fact, well-grounded. One of the problems with working outside the home is that it prohibits women from properly performing their domestic duties. In the opening scenes of the book, Mary is the domestic-woman-in-training who, under her mother's supervision, competently fries up ham and eggs and properly cares for a cheerful house full of guests. "Mrs. Barton knew manners too well to do anything but sit at the tea-table and make tea, though in her heart she longed to be able to superintend the frying of the ham, and cast many an anxious look at Mary as she broke the eggs and turned the ham, with a very comfortable portion of confidence in her own culinary powers" (17). When Mrs. Barton dies, Mary loses her mother's guidance, her domestic training ends, and the working-class home begins to break up. The Barton home, with its "warm and glowing" fire, "hospitable" atmosphere, "blue and white checkered curtains" and "two geraniums, unpruned and leafy," formed a "defense from out-door pryers" and allowed "friends" to meet and "enjoy themselves" while privately "shut in" (12-13). This happy interior home space slowly deteriorates after Mary's death.

The home is such an important rallying point for the ideology of domesticity that we see Mary's imminent peril of falling in the breakup of her home. And, when his wife dies, "one of the good influences over John Barton's life" dies with

her (22). John goes out of control. He becomes increasingly more violent, and "once in his passion he had even beaten" Mary (135). John cannot keep work, and the household goods are, piece by piece, sold off. The house becomes a dismal space, which lacked "the cheerful look it had had in the days when money was never wanted to purchase soap and brushes, black-lead and pipe-clay. It was dingy and comfortless" (134). The domestic woman's "devoted application of domestic economy might enhance the value of a man's meager wages" (Armstrong 87). She can stretch money, make something from nothing, and help keep her husband in the work force. "Home" and "family," then, cannot exist without a good domestic woman to organize and maintain them. As Esther tells Jem "decent, good people have homes. We have none" (193). Without her mother's tutelary guidance, Mary's domestic training stops and she enlists herself to Mrs. Simmonds as a dressmaker's apprentice. Shortly after this, she begins a downward spiral parallel to that attributed to Esther. She comes home later and later, she is open to Harry Carson's attentions, and she indulges her romantic imagining and longing for social status.

The Fallen Woman as Home Wrecker

The breakup of the Barton home is, in part at least, attributable to Esther. The domestic woman makes a stable home and family, while the fallen woman destroys home and disrupts family. She is the figurative, if not the literal,

death of the domestic woman. In fact, John blames Esther for his wife Mary's death. He:

> Recalled the doctor's words, and bitterly thought of the shock his poor wife had so recently had, in the mysterious disappearance of her cherished sister. His feelings towards Esther almost amounted to curses. It was she who had brought on all this sorrow. Her giddiness, her lightness of conduct, had wrought this woe. His previous thoughts about her had been tinted with wonder and pity, but now he hardened his heart against her for ever. (22)

Not only is Esther responsible for Mrs. Barton's death and the ensuing breakup of the formerly happy home, she poses a constant threat of contagion. Any communication Esther has with Mary is potentially contaminating. As Anderson argues, Gaskell feared that "once female subjects 'read' cultural texts like Esther, they become imprinted, ideologically reproduced" (123). Mary's resemblance to Esther embodies the "threat of mimetic contamination" (Anderson 123). Their resemblance produces anxiety in John, who "often looked at Mary and wished she were not so like her aunt, for the very bodily likeness seemed to suggest the possibility of a similar likeness in their fate; and then this idea used to enrage his irritable mind, and he became suspicious and anxious about Mary's conduct" (167). Gaskell's narrative attributes Mary's near fall to her imitation of her aunt Esther. Once, Esther asked Mary: "What should you think if I sent for you some day and made a lady of you!" (7). Mary remembers "the sayings of her absent, the mysterious aunt Esther," which "had an acknowledged influence over [her]. She knew she was very

pretty"(26). Mary thus has implanted in her the desire for class transgression Esther represents. "With this consciousness [Mary] had early determined that her beauty should make her a lady; the rank she coveted the more for her father's abuse; the rank to which she firmly believed her lost aunt Esther had arrived" (27). Mary plays out this desire in her flirtation with Harry Carson:

> Mary was ambitious and did not favor Mr. Carson the less because he was rich and a gentleman. The old leaven, infused years ago by her aunt Esther, fermented in her little bosom, and perhaps all the more, for her father's aversion to the rich and the gentle. Such is the contrariness of the human heart, from Eve downwards, that we all, in our old-Adam state, fancy things forbidden sweetest. So Mary dwelt upon and enjoyed the idea of some day becoming a lady, and doing all the elegant nothings appertaining to lady-hood. (92)

Working-Class Romance Plots and Domestication

Mary is tempted, but, unlike the other fallen women of these novels, secures her position as respectable working-class wife and mother by refusing temptation. Her ability to resist temptation relies upon her accepting the role of the domesticated working-class woman, a role defined by her willingness to choose a mate of her own class, to raise his legitimate children, to labor in domestic service for her husband and children, and to keep her husband laboring in the service of the state. Gaskell's narrative accomplishes Mary's domestication through the inculcation of the ideal of romantic love. Explicating Gaskell's *Cranford* and *Wives and Daughters*,

Langland argues that "the boy-marries-girl romance plot and the corollary drive of the loving couple toward solid, middle-class respectability" achieves a "mystification of the bourgeois project" (113).

> Gaskell indulges in the rhetoric of romance in a way that exposes it as a fiction concocted by individuals to mask more utilitarian motives. ... The entanglement of social convenience with personal desire reveals "love" as a construction, especially because the question of a "suitable" partner is foremost. (Langland 136)

While Gaskell's middle-class romance plots reveal "love" as a construction and expose the "rhetoric of love and spiritual uplift" and the way "love is harnessed to the work of solidifying social bonds and social status" (137), her working-class romance plots participate in another mystification designed to prohibit class transgression and domesticate working-class women. Middle-class romance plots mystify the means by which mutually advantageous middle-class marriage contracts are forged. Within this discourse, it is the *individual's* desire for personal or economic gain that is masked and that Gaskell's critique unmasks. *But the working-class "true love" romance mystifies the means by which cross-class unions are prohibited.* In the "true love" romance, working-class women recognize their true love for working-class men, and this recognition entails a revelation of the vanity of desiring an upper-class mate. Accepting "true love" as *recognition and revelation* masks the "true love" plot's *socio-political-economic* desire to demarcate and segregate the

classes. Within this discourse, romantic *imagination* (the frog turns into a prince, Prince Charming meets Cinderella) *ruins* young girls. But *true love saves* them.

Gaskell uncritically represents Mary's recognition and revelation of true love for Jem without exposing it as mystification. Theoretically, Mary *could* marry Harry when he eventually asks her and still maintain her respectability while also moving up in class. But, within Gaskell's narrative structure, to marry Harry *would be to fall*. As Kalikoff argues, "conventionally, women in Victorian fiction fall because of the powerfully appealing possibility of romantic love and social mobility ... Class is almost always a crucial element in the equation of seduction." Thus, marrying above her class would be, for Mary, "the greatest fall possible" ("Falling Woman" 358). Similarly, when Ruth is tempted by Bellingham's proposal, she is threatened with a spiritual fall: to *marry* would destroy the redemption she has earned through a maternal self-negation grounded in her spiritual *work* and physical *labor*. Ultimately, then, the fallen woman is one who refuses the *work* appropriate to her *class* and who rejects self-renunciation. Mary *can* marry Jem because he is of the same *class*. Thus Gaskell's narrative, while it demystifies middle-class "love" and critiques the romance plot, participates in another mystification of "true love" as recognition and revelation which leads working-class women to same-class unions and domestic happiness. The

discourse of true love, then, is as much about "the right boy meeting the right girl" as is the romance plot (Langland 147).

Transgressive Desire and Punishment

Simply recognizing true love is, however, not enough to save Mary from suffering. She flirted with Harry, desired upward social mobility, and rejected Jem's first proposal. She believes she deserves her suffering and that her flirting ruined Jem. When she believes Jem guilty of killing Harry Carson, she asks:

> Oh, why did she ever listen to the tempter? Why did she ever give ear to her own suggestions, and cravings after wealth and grandeur? Why had she thought it a fine thing to have a rich lover?
> She--she had deserved it all/ but he was the victim,--he, the beloved. (271)

After refusing Jem's proposal, she sees Harry's wealth and her desire for them as "hollow vanities to her, now she had discovered the passionate secret of her soul. She felt as if she almost hated Mr. Carson, who had decoyed her with his baubles. She now saw how vain, how nothing to her, would be all the gaieties and pomps, all joys and pleasures, unless she might share them with Jem" (152-3). Having balked against her role as domestic woman, she must be punished. Even her best friend, Margaret, has "no sympathy with the temptations to which loveliness, vanity, ambition, or the desire of being admired, exposes so many; no sympathy with flirting girls, in short" (294). And Mary accepts this judgement. She "knew herself to blame; felt her errors in every fibre of her heart"

(304). Within this discursive construction, Mary is guilty of far more than vain flirtation--she is guilty of wreaking social havoc and moral disorder. Without domestic women, men and children run amuck and chaos reigns. Jem tells Mary: "You'll hear, may be, of me as a drunkard, and may be as a thief, and may be as a murderer. Remember! when all are speaking ill of me, you will have no right to blame me, for it's your cruelty that will have made me what I feel I shall become. You won't even say you'll try to like me; will you, Mary?" (151). And his mother tells her that "I shall lay his death at thy door" (295). Man's ruin, then, is woman's fault. Mary secures her place as a *good* woman by accepting full responsibility for Jem's despair and her penance for having desired more than the life of a working-class drudge. Having realized that "she had been very wrong" to refuse Jem, she resolves to:

> Try and do right, and have womanly patience, until [Jem] saw her changed and repentant mind in her natural actions. Even if she had to wait for years, it was no more than now it was easy to look forward to, as a penance for her giddy flirting on the one hand, and her cruel mistake concerning her feelings on the other. (154)

Having accepted her penance and chosen a working-class husband over a rich lover and ease and comfort, Mary is redeemed. She is properly domesticated, and the home is the insignia of domestication. Significantly, once Mary hears of Jem's arrest and positions herself as his defender, she does *not* return to work. The domestic woman's sphere is within the

home and her responsibilities to her husband and children. Reading in Mary's championship of Jem the full realization of her domestication seems at first to be at odds with the narrative's representation of Mary's *activity*. In order to free Jem, she must actively lobby on his behalf: she investigates the circumstances surrounding the murder; she holds secret information about her father's guilt and devises a plan to free Jem while not implicating her father; she convinces Job Legh to help her secure Jem's freedom; she makes a perilous journey from Manchester to Liverpool in order to find Will and get him to provide and alibi for Jem. In fact, Mary engages in a flurry of activity which requires calm, strength, reasoning, legal maneuvers, travel--and she is *successful*. In this sense, Mary ventures into the world and emerges victorious.

But what precisely is Mary's *victory*? While her significant activity is an extension outside of the domestic realm, it is a *failed* domestic space that she leaves, *and* she leaves this space *in order to* realize a domestic harmony with Jem. Mary's venture is victorious *because* she secures for herself a husband and a home, and, once this is secured, she remains *within* the domestic space she has won. And, while she at one level does access the word--she speaks on Jem's behalf in the courtroom--*her* speaking is little more than a public confession of her guilt and not sufficient to secure Jem's release. It is Will's last-minute dramatic arrival and

testimony that wins Jem's acquittal. Mary's speaking is "a public rite of humiliation in order to attain repentance" (Kalikoff "Falling Woman" 364). Her *word* is not authorized--she does not wield, in Bourdieu's terms, the performative power of speech. In fact, it is because Jem made the mistake of acting on the authority of Mary's *word* that he and Mary did not unite, he had the fatal fight with Harry, and was subsequently arrested. As Mary says, "I never found out how dearly I loved another till one day, when James Wilson asked me to marry him, and I was very hard and sharp in my answer ... and he took me at my word and left me" (383). Had Jem *not* taken her at her *word*, much of the ensuing trauma would have been avoided. Ultimately, then, Mary's courtroom confession establishes woman's word as unreliable and reinscribes woman's access to the word as her confession of sexual transgression.[47]

The novel closes with a celebration of domestic harmony, however hard won. Jem's arrest and the shadow cast on Mary's character make it impossible for them to remain in Manchester.

[47]One might at first read Esther's insistence on telling her story--"confessing"--to Jem as access to the word. But, as Anderson argues, Esther's encounter with Jem Wilson reveals her "vexed status as both social victim and figure for melodrama or romance; and her encounter with Mary...reveals how gender inflects the scene of reading, as well as the difficulties Gaskell's implicit ideology poses for a feminist reading" (117). Esther with Jem is linked to Coleridge's Mariner, compelled to speak, obsessed with her own story. "Like Coleridge's Mariner, then, Esther is a narratively straightjacketed character: the allusion renders explicit her peculiar status as a person become a story" (118). In this sense, her speech is less her own than it is a compulsive repetition of the already-written story she inscribes. Esther's word lacks its own authority.

Having been implicated in social disruption, they must emigrate in order to secure their domestic space. Our last image is of Jem and Mary in Canada, and, "at the door of the house, looking towards the town, stands Mary, watching the return of her husband from his daily work" (463). This image of the domesticated woman greeting the returning husband is echoed in *Adam Bede*. Mary's domestic bliss is amplified by Esther's realization that she would "work, and toil, and starve, and die, if necessary, for a husband, a home,--for children" (279).

David Copperfield

Like the other novels I have examined, *David Copperfield's* narratives of the fall reveal the class transgression underlying narratives of fallenness, the punitive quality of narratives of redemption, and the ideological work of gender in domesticating working-class women. It further demonstrates the importance of this work to *keeping* middle-class women domesticated and directing middle-class male desire to appropriate middle-class marriage partners. While the novel is in fact about David working out his social and economic dilemmas and securing for himself a middle-class life, it simultaneously prohibits such agency for women, especially working-class women.[48] Men can have access

[48]It can be argued that Betsey Trotwood's character offers possibilities of agency for women comparable to that David works out for himself. She has sworn off of men, abandons her

to the world. As David says: "Misty ideas of being a young man at my own disposal, of the importance attaching to a young man at his own disposal, of the wonderful things to be seen and done by that magnificent animal, and the wonderful effects he could not fail to make upon society, lured me away" (330). This access to public city space, independent living and unchaperoned movement (traditionally male venues), was increasingly open to women in the urban industrial landscape. The trope of the prostitute in *David Copperfield*, as with the other novels I have examined, works to restructure working-class women's sexual relations along the lines of middle-class domesticity and demonizes working-class women's narrative fantasies for upward social mobility. But *David Copperfield* reveals another important function of the trope of the

sister-in-law, Clara, when she delivers a boy instead of a girl, and takes in a series of working-class women in order to "train" them to self-sufficiency. But Betsey, it turns out, is being extorted by her still-living husband; her women-projects invariably end up getting married; and, after her loyal silence about Wickfield's loss of her income, moves in with David and sets up good housekeeping. In the end, then, Betsey, while eccentric, does not have access to the same agency David achieves. She does not restore herself to her position through her own work: it is David who, after her economic fall, opens his lodging to her (though admittedly these are lodgings she has provided for him) and Traddles who discovers Heep's fraud and restores Betsey's income. More crucially, Betsey is perhaps best known as Mr. Dick's protector and champion. Mr. Dick, who *is* a sympathetic and endearing character, is nevertheless an impotent man; he has been cast off by his relatives, the only writing for which he is competent is legal copying, and he cannot be self-sufficient in the world. Ultimately, then, Betsey is good only for launching David's career and recognizing Mr. Dick's virtues. Her possibilities for agency are thus, as with other women in the narrative, highly limited.

prostitute: it articulates the anxiety underlying working and middle-class women's mass entry into public space. A considerable social anxiety attached to factory girls going home late; working-class women entering, often unescorted, dance halls and shopping malls; the wide availability of public transportation which enabled women to move easily throughout the city. The threat of being unable to contain women's movement also underlies social, political, medical and literary efforts to categorize and restrain them. Like Mary Barton, *David Copperfield* is explicitly linked to the colonial-imperial project--the residue, the underside of domestic failure, emigrate. But *David Copperfield* also demonstrates the raced nature of fallenness. The working-classes are infantilized and commodified, a move that equates them with the colonized other.

The Fall and Class Transgression

Emily's character affords the most obvious reading of working-class women's fall as a result of their desire for upward social mobility (signified as moral turpitude) and their animally seducing bodies. While Dickens' narrative *does* represent Emily sympathetically, there is nevertheless a narrative ambivalence about whether Emily is an innocent victim of seduction or culpable for eliciting desire. Anderson notes the peculiar mixture of "sympathy and sadism" throughout the text, a mixture that requires an interpretation

of Emily to account for both the narrative's empathy for Emily and its voyeuristic pleasure in her fall.[49] On the sympathetic register, Emily's desire to "be a lady" is presented as her desire to help her relatives: "I wake when [the wind] blows, and tremble to think of Uncle Dan and Ham and believe I hear 'em crying out for help. That's why I should like so much to be a lady" (85-86).[50] But we are also first introduced to her as "a most beautiful little girl ... with a necklace of blue beads on," who wouldn't let David "kiss her when [he] offered to, but ran away and hid herself" (80). The child Emily elicits the child David's desire [albeit a desire represented as "innocent"], and, while her first response is to "hide herself," this initial withdrawal does not impede the progress of their childhood romance. David fancies Emily and himself married, and she is the love of his childhood and early adolescent life.

An analysis of Emily as seductress must be sensitive to the difference between David-the-character and David-the-

[49]Anderson argues that "moments of harshness, recoil, or scapegoating frequently inhabit even moments of ostensible charity and vindication" (95). Peggotty is "obsessed with a fantasy of [Emily's] utter prostration" (95), Martha Endell "delivers melodramatic speeches about the necessity of her own obliteration and is descriptively assimilated to the degraded urban environment" (95), and, "in order to fully vindicate Annie ... the reader ... must do violence to the image of Annie's innocence" (96).

[50]Emily's fantasy of her Uncle Dan and her fellow orphan/eventual fiancé Ham can also be read as Emily's anger--the rescue fantasy which is built upon an initial punishment works two ways.

adult-narrator. Keeping in mind the extent to which the narration is informed by the narrator's adult interpretations, we still discover ample textual evidence that Emily, whether or not the character David perceived her at the time as eliciting his desire, is presented by the *narrator* David as having done so. During their adolescent courting, the narrator recalls that "she seemed to delight in teasing me" (194). She was both "sly and shy at once" (195) and "tormenting" (376). During a late adolescent visit to Yarmouth, David hears rumors of Emily as a "bad woman," and, when he spies on her with Minnie's child, he reflects that she had "enough of willfulness in her bright face to justify what [he] had heard; with much of the old capricious coyness lurking in it" (364). Though he goes on to say that he is sure there was nothing in Emily but what was meant for goodness and happiness, the mention of her "wilfulness" and "capricious coyness" justifies the gossip he has heard about Emily as a bad woman, a woman who transgresses bounds, is uncontainable and therefore cast as a threat and cast out in order to contain the threat she poses. As Poovey argues, "the narrative assigns to woman--in this case, Emily--responsibility for the 'stain' of sexual provocation, even though the extent to which Emily is conscious of her sexuality is left unclear" (97).

Emily's sexuality thus underwrites the seduction narrative. Like Esther, she is acknowledged in advance as the

outcast fallen woman. As Anderson argues, "at both the level of retrospective narration and the level of the event narrated, Emily is reduced to the form of a fall; she becomes an outline of her own future ... hers is a being perceived in advance of itself" (97). As in *Adam Bede*, working-class women's desire for upward social mobility is sexualized, and the working-class women's threat, coded as sexual (she elicits male desire), is then punished in these narratives of the fall. Poovey argues that, in fact, "Emily's punishment is multifaceted and extreme: she is almost completely exiled from the novel after her fall" and "she is subjected to Rosa Dartle's vicious verbal scarification, of which both David and the reader are horrified observers" (96). Poovey further argues that "in *David Copperfield* ... woman is made to bear the burden of sexuality and to be the site of sexual guilt because the problematic aspects of sexuality can be rhetorically (if not actually) mastered when they are externalized and figured in an other" (98).

Part of the problem Emily represents is that, as a working-class woman, she is not an *appropriate* object of desire for middle-class men. Poovey has argued that Emily poses an:

> Indirect threat to the identity of the hero ... specifically, the possibility that David's childhood infatuation with Emily might mature into love introduces into the rhetoric of affection the specter of class. ... A sexual relationship between the two could only lead to harm: if he seduced but did not marry her, it would ruin David's honor; if he made Emily his wife, it would

> exclude David from the social position he "deserves." (98)

Similarly, McClintock argues the problem domestic servants pose for middle-class women's subjectivity.[51] The middle-class household relied on paid labor to perform the dirty work of domesticity. "The separation of the private from the public was achieved only by paying working-class women for domestic work that wives were supposed to perform for free. Servants' labor was indispensable to the process of transforming wives *labor* power into their husbands' *political* power" (164). This resulted in a "class doubling" of the Victorian household (89). The very people (generally women) taking physical care of and spending large amounts of time with middle-class children were "off limits" to them socially--the class divisions differentiating "subjects" from "servants" ("us" from "them") entailed a devaluing and dehumanization of the people performing paid labor in middle-class households. For

[51]In her critique of Freud's oedipal theory as both concealing and revealing class as a dimension of power within bourgeois family structures, McClintock argues that:

> By forgetting the nurse, Freud could forget the structuring of infant and social identity around economic imbalances in the family. The family romance is cleansed of class contamination and, most crucially, of money. Through the Oedipal theory, the multiplicity of family economies are reduced to an economy of one, naturalized and privatized as the universal unit of the monogamous family of man, a "hereditary scheme" transcending history and culture. The family is vaunted as lying beyond politics and hence beyond social change, at precisely the moment that Victorian middle-class women began to challenge the boundaries between private and public, waged work and unwaged work. (93)

the middle-classes, "this doubling gives rise to a fragility and uncertainty of identity," one aspect of which we can read in "the ubiquitous references in Victorian male life to working-class women as "unsexed," "manly," "coarse" and "rude" (95).[52]

This difficulty inflects our reading of Clara Copperfield and Clara Peggotty. The two women are linked by their Christian names, which the narrator admits was a domestic confusion. While both women are early objects of David's desire, the narrative acknowledges desire only for the mother. David eroticizes his mother, whom he remembers with "her pretty hair and youthful shape," and he desexualizes Peggotty, whom he remembers as having:

> No shape at all, and eyes so dark that they seemed to darken their whole neighbourhood in her face, and cheeks and arms so hard and red that I wondered the birds didn't peck her in preference to apples. (61)

Additionally, Peggotty's forefinger was "roughened by needlework, like a pocket nutmeg-grater" (61), an image which recurs in the closing scene of the book. The repetition of Peggotty's's hardened forefinger is noteworthy in that it marks her hands as sites of manual labor and utility and,

[52]This quote is particularly interesting in its construction of Peggotty as *colored* and *subhuman*. As a "dark" and a "red" woman, she is linked to the colonized Africans, Indians, and Native Americans. As a shapeless object to be mistaken by birds for apples, she is less than human. This illustrates the double disavowal by dominant Victorian society, in which "women's domestic work in the industrial metropolis and ... colonized labor in the cultures coming under violent imperial rule" were devalued (138).

as phallic symbol, as a site of power. While Peggotty may be a site of power for David, hers is a power *in his service* (properly domesticated). Her body is desexualized, a narrative move particularly interesting when read next to David's expression of attachment to and desire for her: Peggotty refuses to marry until David's home has broken up and she can no longer serve him, and then she marries only after obtaining David's approval and permission and making clear that she is, first and foremost, David's possession, and only secondarily her husband's. Peggotty's loyalty to David allows him to *keep* her without having to recognize his desire to *possess* her. Peggotty is thus the *good* working-class woman. David can neither similarly keep Emily nor misrecognize his desire to possess her. She elicits his desire, and her body cannot be so clearly differentiated from those of the middle-class women who *are* appropriate objects of his desire: she is *not* shapeless, coarse, roughened. The narrative anxiety surrounding Emily, then, is at least in part the anxiety of signification: her body is not written as working-class. Even Steerforth swears that "she was born to be a lady" (393).[53] On what basis are the classes to be differentiated, and thus segregated, if they cannot be told apart? David's attraction

[53]Poovey argues that, though the desire Emily elicits is first and most strongly attached to David, it is Steerforth that ultimately acts out this "complex of desire and punitive anger of which hostility towards sexuality is the cause and Emily the object" (98).

to Emily is thus doubly problematic in that it both reflects his own fears of attenuated agency and defies class bounds.

Narratives of the Fall and the Legitimation of Working-Class Women's Exploitation

Anderson has already argued the important identification between David and Annie, Martha, and Emily.[54] And Poovey makes an important psychoanalysis of the "transfer of David's affection from his mother to Emily to Dora to Agnes," which "works through the constellation of desire, anger, and anxiety structurally associated with but narratively distanced from the mother" (99).[55] I would like to extend these analyses of

[54]I concur with Anderson's argument that "David is terrified of being absorbed by the kind of degraded environment that ... produce[s] Martha" (100). Martha's "central role in the novel is to figure an unstable relation between self and environment, one from which David must distance himself, one against which he consolidates a self" (100). Similarly, David "identifies most deeply with" Annie, "a character who must protest that she is not fallen" (100). David's autonomous subject position is thus determined against the attenuated agency of the fallen woman, a determination which symbolically casts out his fears of his own attenuated agency. Anderson's argument is, however, most concerned with:

> The specific and repeated gendering of the predicaments of social constraint, one that allots to the fallen woman spectacular ordeals: loss of identity distinct from one's own immediate surrounding, enforced and nontransformative self-readings, and deficient immunity from the constraint and contagion of narrative. (106-7)

While I share these concerns, I am most interested in pursuing the specific relations between narrative representations of fallenness, and the ideological work of these narratives to the modern restructuring of working-class sexual and family relations.

[55]Poovey argues that:

> In *David Copperfield*...we see the construction of the ideal of unity at the site of the mother; this

the proliferated doubles and problems of agency in the novel to account for the threat working-class women pose to middle-class male agency and for the role narratives of the fall play in legitimating working-class women's exploitation. We can read one level of working-class women's fall legitimating middle-class exploitation and power in David's feminized relation to Steerforth. This relation exposes the middle-class male subject's anxiety about appropriating power in the new bourgeois state. The triangulated relation between Emily,

> takes the form of a series of substitutions that exposes and punished the mother's guilt without jeopardizing the idealized woman she retrospectively becomes. That this structural and ideological rewriting of the mother is explicitly represented as the story of David's psychological maturation--his education in how to know his own heart and choose the proper partner--masks the extent to which his identity depends on the contradictions repressed by this symbolic work. (92)

Clara Copperfield--who is "unfaithful" to David with Mr. Murdstone--"is indirectly to blame for David's being sent to the bottling warehouse, that degradation that momentarily threatens to 'blight [his]...career, and ruin his prospects" (99). Dora is a double of Clara, neither of whom can perform their proper work. Both Clara and Dora are failed domestic women, a failure particularly
threatening to middle-class male identity because women's "domestic authority--indeed, her self-realization--depended on her ability to regulate her own desire." Thus "the faithful woman as wife anchored her husband's desire along with her own, giving it an object as she gave him a home. In this model, self-regulation was a particularly valuable and valued form of labor, for it domesticated a man's (sexual desire in the private sphere without curtailing his ambition in the economy" (115). There is then a link between domestic mismanagement and sexual infidelity: "a middle-class woman who did not manage her servants efficiently (as Dora does not) jeopardied the ground of middle-class male identity as surely as did a woman who was sexually unfaithful, because she made it clear that class exploitation was integral to middle-class domesticity" (115).

Steerforth, and David reveals more than David's desire for Emily--it *works out* his fear of not being able to *earn/deserve* Dora. Because David ultimately proves himself the hero of his story, the novel reaffirms the relation between work, earnings, and justice for men while simultaneously redefining and limiting women's appropriate work: women are increasingly confined to the domestic realm; working-class women must be the invisible laborers in the domestic and industrial economies; and, while men may make (and lose) their fortunes in the industrial/imperial economy, women *may not*--their new job is to manage the *display* of wealth. And the working-class women's labor necessary to the display of wealth is always effaced.

Most obviously, David and Emily occupy equivalent subject positions through their mutual attraction to Steerforth. Both hopelessly (and helplessly) adore him and both are seduced by him. David idolizes Steerforth and perceives him to be a superior human being. And, like Emily, he attaches to Steerforth and is, for a time, "protected" by him. ("Protector" was the popular euphemism for a mistress's upper-class lover. Thus Steerforth as David's "protector" parallels Steerforth as Emily's "keeper.") David believes that Steerforth has "some inborn power of attraction" and "carried a spell with him to which it was a natural weakness to yield" (157). He fondly remembers Steerforth's "dashing way ... of treating [him] like a plaything" which "was more agreeable to

[him] than any behaviour he could have adopted" (358). Mrs. Mowcher calls David "soft wax in his hands" (524). And David cannot, in the end, blame Steerforth for seducing Emily:

> Deeply as I felt my own unconscious part in his pollution of an honest home, I believed that if I had been brought face to face with him, I could not have uttered one reproach. I should have loved him so well still--though he fascinated me no longer--I should have held in so much tenderness the memory of my affection for him, that I think I should have been as weak as a spirit-wounded child, in all but the entertainment of a thought that we could ever be re-united. (516)

As Poovey points out, Steerforth's seduction of Emily plays out David's desire for her. But more profoundly, Emily's relation to Steerforth mirrors David's anxieties about being able to "earn" Dora. Approaching the Emily-Steerforth-David-Dora relation from this position, it is also clear that Emily is to Steerforth as David is to Dora: just as Emily is an inappropriate mate for Steerforth, Dora's father rejects David as a suitor for Dora: he is too poor, not well enough established. Since David's aunt lost her fortune, he has no money or means of his own, and Mr. Spenlow chastises David for not properly considering their different stations: "Have you considered my daughter's station in life, the projects I may contemplate for her advancement, the testamentary intentions I may have with reference to her? Have you considered anything, Mr. Copperfield?" (614). David pleads his case, explaining that he has "exerted every energy" to "improve" his fortune: "I am sure I shall improve it in time. Will you grant me time" (615).

In time, then, David *does earn* Dora. While Emily can do nothing to "deserve" Steerforth, a number of happy coincidences combine to allow David to "earn" Dora. Dora's father loses his fortune. He, like so many other characters in the novel, "falls." Mr. Spenlow's fall, which anticipates and is the backdrop against which David "rises," marks the anxiety attendant upon class status that relies upon the acquisition of money: the middle-class *can* fall out of fortune as well as rise into it.[56] After her father dies, Dora goes to her aunts, from whom David's hard work and dedication eventually win approval. No such option is open to Emily. Steerforth's mother lives, Steerforth himself is not inclined to marry beneath him, and there is no work available to Emily which would allow her to "make herself" (make money, gain respectable middle-class status) as does David. David's ability to prove himself through the value of his work is especially important to the narrative because his identity as a "gentleman," conferred upon him through his father, is threatened on several registers: his mother's class position

[56]There are, in fact, a number of significant "falls" in the book. As other critics have noted, David's fall is closely linked to Emily's; Clara Copperfield and Dora Spenlow-Copperfield, as Poovey argues, "fall"; Betsey Trotwood falls (loses her fortune); Mr. Wickfield falls (becomes an alcoholic, loses his practice); Annie falls symbolically; the Micawbers are the always-falling; Steerforth falls, in consequence of which his mother and Rosa Dartle also decline; Mr. Dick falls (out of sanity and consequently his family's support). The proliferation of fallen/falling characters are the fabric against which and the condition upon which David may rise.

(she is a nurserymaid before David's father marries her); his mother's second marriage to Mr. Murdstone, which is doubly threatening because he is exiled from his home and because his father willed all of his assets to his mother and made no separate provision for David; and his aunt's loss of fortune. These threats to David's class position and the strategies through which he not only maintains his class identity but *proves* that he deserves them are part of the novel's articulation of the middle-class male fear of attenuated subjectivity. The narrative allows David to *earn* access to the bastions of middle-class respectability and thereby alleviates the anxiety surrounding middle-class male claims to power and subjectivity.

Failed Domestic Women and Narratives of the Fall

Poovey argues that "domestic mismanagement is linked to sexual infidelity in *David Copperfield*: a middle-class woman who did not manage her servants efficiently (as Dora does not) jeopardized the ground of middle-class male identity as surely as did a woman who was sexually unfaithful, because she made it clear that class exploitation was integral to middle-class domesticity" (115). I would like to enlarge upon an analysis of the relation between failed domestic women and tropes of fallenness in *David Copperfield*. Both Clara and Dora are child-wives, pretty, vain, and flirtatious women who have not properly renounced body and desire in the name of domestic

work. David knows that men's attention pleases his mother (73). And Dora, like Emily, is indulged, pampered, treated like a toy. She is not to be bothered with work. When David admonishes her to learn good housekeeping, she says: "Oh, please don't be practical! ... Because it frightens me so! ... I haven't got any strength at all" (604). Dora asks David to call her his child-wife (711). Because neither Clara nor Dora understand proper, they occupy a boarder position between fallenness and virtue. Both refuse the work appropriate to their stations. The middle-class woman's work is household management, caring for and arranging the goods of empire in the castle of empire--the middle-class home. Dora not only refuses *her* work, she dissuades David from his. She tells him: "Now don't get up at five o'clock, you naughty boy. It's so nonsensical! ... don't do it [go to work]! ... why should you?" (608). Dora cannot manage the servants, and, while she does finally take possession of those symbolically important keys, they are a toy to her, "the whole bunch in a little basket, tied to her slender waist," though David "seldom found that the places to which they belonged were locked, or that they were of any use except as a plaything for Jip" (715). But the most explicit relation between failed domesticity and fallenness is in the character of Annie Strong. The narrative suspects Annie of infidelity, a suspicion which flourishes *because* she cannot safeguard her home or her husband's resources from outside intruders. To complicate matters, it

is her family that intrudes upon the domestic scene. That Annie specifically fails as a domestic manager but is implicated as an adulteress explicates the relation between failed domestic women and *fallen* women.

Clara, Dora, and, to a lesser extent, Annie, are thus like Emily. All are undomesticated, all are implicated in an uncontained sexuality, and all are unable to perform the work appropriate to their stations. But it is not just that the failed domestic woman disrupts home and happiness. It is also that, like the fallen woman, she is *contagious*. The woman who cannot manage her house, which entails containing desire, is a contagion. David tells Dora: "My love ... it is very painful to me to think that our want of system and management, involves not only ourselves (which we have got used to), but other people as well" (760). He says that:

> There is a contagion in us. We infect everyone about us. ... It is not merely ... that we lose money and comfort, and even tempers sometimes, by not learning to be more careful; but that we incur the serious responsibility of spoiling everyone who comes into our service, or has any dealings with us. I begin to be afraid that the fault is not entirely on one side, but that these people all turn out ill because we don't turn out very well ourselves. (761)

The middle-class's supervision and regulation keeps the working-class, like recalcitrant children, good and happy. If the middle-class fails in its supervisory role, the working-class will be shiftless, lazy, rebellious and uncontrolled. The domestic woman, class manager par excellence, is thus charged with maintaining social order both within her house,

and, by extension, within the country. Her failure marks the decline of the domestic house, the decline of Britain, and of the English race. This discourse is marked by the rhetoric of duty. David says that:

> Unless we learn to do our duty to those whom we employ, they will never learn to do their duty to us. I am afraid we present opportunities to people to do wrong, that never ought to be presented. Even if we were as lax as we are, in all our arrangements, by choice--which we are not--even if we liked it, and found it agreeable to be so--which we don't--I am persuaded we should have no right to go on in this way. We are positively corrupting people. We are bound to think of that. (762)

The failed domestic woman ruins both servants and children and thus jeopardizes proper order and good government. As such, she is a fallen woman. Her fall is into the unbounded, the uncontained, the unregulated, all of which are indicators of an uncontrollable materiality always associated with the excessive woman's body. The domestic woman is "that pervading influence which sanctifies while it enhances" the home; who regulates the home, husband, and children (474). Dora is not a companionate wife. David mourns this lack, thinking: "It would have been better for me if my wife could have helped me more, and shared the many thoughts in which I had no partner; and that this might have been; I knew" (765).

Dora, then, is no more an appropriate object of desire for David than is Emily. As with Emily, Tess, Ruth, Hetty, Esther and Martha, Dora must realize her sins and embrace her penance for them. She tells David:

> I was such a silly little creature! I am afraid it would have been better, if we had only loved each other as a boy and girl, and forgotten it. I have begun to think I was not fit to be a wife. ... I was very happy, very. But, as years went on, my dear boy would have wearied of his child-wife. She would have been less and less a companion for him. He would have been more and more sensible of what was wanting in his home. She wouldn't have improved. It is better as it is. (837)

Like Tess, Dora accepts her death as necessary for her husband's happiness and bequeaths to him another, appropriate, asexual wife. Before she dies, Dora tells Agnes, the model of the angel in the house, that if David takes another wife it should be her. The ideal domestic woman thus assumes her rightful place as companionate wife to the middle-class male.

The fallen woman, then, whether working or middle class, ruins the home, economy, domestic and international government. Emily's desire for Steerforth instead of Ham ruins both Ham's life and Steerforth's. But the working-class fallen woman poses in particular the threat of *"domestic degeneracy,"* which McClintock argues was "widely used to mediate the manifold contradictions in imperial hierarchy." Prostitutes, domestic workers, the working class--all were figured, along with the Irish and Jews, as "white negroes" (53). They posed the threat of racial encroachment and degeneracy. From the middle-class point of view, Emily is a "designing enemy" (741), a "piece of pollution, picked up from the water-side, to be made much of for an hour, and then tossed back to her original place!"(788). Rosa calls her and her uncle "a depraved, worthless set" and would like to have

Emily "whipped!" (532). The extent to which the middle class can perceive the working-class woman as a commodity is clear when Rosa tells Emily: "You were a part of the trade of your home, and were bought and sold like any other vendible thing your people dealt in" (788).

Configured as racially regressive, there is no more logical place for the fallen figures of the novel than the colonies. Indeed, emigration is celebrated as the salvation for Emily, Martha, Peggotty, Mrs. Gummidge, and the Micawbers. In Australia, Martha marries and becomes a respectable wife and mother. Emily redeems herself with her work. In Peggotty's words, she is:

> Fond of going any distance fur to teach a child, or fur to tend a sick person, or fur to do some kindness tow'rds a young girl's wedding (and she's done a many, but has never seen one); fondly loving of her uncle; patient; liked by young and old; sowt out by all that has any trouble. That's Emily! (942)

The Micawbers, emblems of financial and sexual over-spending, rise to the governing ranks: Mr. Micawber becomes a magistrate. In the end, Britain's residue is sent to the colonies, where, as McClintock argues, an imperial narrative figures a regeneration of the "family of man":

> In the public and political debates of the late nineteenth century, the swelling superfluity of women and men was figured as a malady and contagion in the national body politic that could be countered by leeching off the bad fluid and depositing it in the colonies. At the same time, much of this interest in colonial emigration was figured within the image of the family. Not a few of the "riddlings of society" ... came from the depressed gentry and the upper classes. (237)

Narratives of the fall, then, restructured working-class sexual and family relations, discursively constructed appropriate workers for the new worker-state, effaced the exploitation of class labor upon which middle-class domesticity relied, and legitimated a broad range of colonial and imperial practices. The *violence* these narratives do to working-class women becomes clear when we juxtapose working-class women's self-representations against middle-class representations of them.

CHAPTER 5
THE OTHER SIDE: WORKING-CLASS WOMEN TELL THEIR STORIES

Reading Working-Class Women's Autobiographies

Working-class women's autobiographical texts tell stories that differ greatly from the literary and institutional representations of them. I approach these self-representations as historical documents to the extent that they are generated in a specific historical time under specific circumstances and within specific ideological conditions. However, I am not looking to these texts for an historical "truth" or a transparent "subject." I am interested, instead, in the contrast between the ways in which these women represent their lives and the ways in which novels, hospital and asylum reports, police and medical reports, religious and charitable tracts, represent them. Butler argues that, "within Lacanian psychoanalysis ... the law repeats itself precisely because it has *failed* to achieve a full and final subjection. ... Indeed, if a full subjection--and subjectivation--were possible, repetition would become superfluous" ("Lana's Imitations" 12). If repetition marks a failure, then the literary and institutional repetition of the narrative of the fallen woman suggests that working-class women posed an unresolvable

problem for the Victorian economy. The "problem" these women posed was defined somewhat differently from institution to institution: the medical problem of physical contagion; the moral problem of spiritual corruption; the economic problem of un- and under-employment; the social problem of motherhood and child-care. If the repetition of institutional and fictional narratives defining and punishing fallenness are indications of working-class women's on-going resistance to efforts to domesticate them, then precisely *how* did these domesticating efforts affect working-class women's lives and what forms did their *resistance* take?

My analysis is indebted to both Leigh Gilmore and Regenia Gagnier's theoretical work with subjectivity and autobiography. In *Autobiographics: A Feminist Theory of Women's Self-Representation*, Gilmore defines her project as an analysis of "how women use self-representation and its constitutive possibilities for agency and subjectivity to become no longer primarily subject to exchange but subjects who exchange the position of object for the subjectivity of self-representational agency" (12). I too am interested in the power of agency working-class women's autobiographies reveal. Gilmore, however, ignores the difference *class* makes to gender. As McClintock says, "no social category exists in privileged isolation; each comes into being in social relation to other categories, if in uneven and contradictory ways" (9). Gagnier, on the other hand, is sensitive to the difference

between working-class self-representations and middle-class representations of them, but her analysis focuses primarily on differences in autobiographical form and constructions of subjectivity.[57] In particular, Gagnier is interested in a taxonomy of genres of autobiography and an analysis of the *intentions and effects* of writing on working-class subjectivity. I am more interested in textual evidence of specific moments of resistance to and subversion of dominant ideologies of gender and class. Beginning with the question McClintock poses in *Imperial Leather*: "What kind of agency is possible in situations of extreme social *inequality*" (140), I

[57]Gagnier does not sufficiently differentiate between the kinds of work performed by middle- and working-class women. She argues that the most fundamental difference between middle- and working-class autobiographies is the structuring effect of "gender dimorphism," in which middle-class boys "learned 'independence' through extrusion from mothers and nannies," while "middle-class girls learned to be dependent upon and obedient to husbands" (44). This reading does not acknowledge middle-class women's domestic work as manager (Langland), the relationship between this work and the changed urban industrial economy and imperialism (Armstrong, McClintock), or the complex relations between middle-class ideologies of gender and the *labor* required of working-class women. While I agree that working-class women's autobiographies construct gender differently than do middle-class women's, it is too reductive to see in working-class women's autobiographies a "gender inversion" in which working-class men learn to be "matronized" (44). Many of the working-class women's texts I've analyzed acknowledge as a component of heterosexual relations the violence inherent in ideologies of gender. Gender oppression features as prominently in these narratives as does class oppression. Saxby's narrative details domestic violence; Smith's narrative describes childhood sexual abuse; and Cullwick's diaries chronicle a sado-masochistic fantasy structure. It is thus extremely important that we not overlook these women's strategies for negotiating a subject position through the *combined* violence of class and gender hierarchies.

ask how women existing in radically unequal power relations exercise their agency: how do they negotiate, resist, transform, subvert the dominant forms of power under which they exist?

These differences not withstanding, Gagnier's identification of the hegemony of "master, or broad cultural, 'narratives' that determine how people see their lives" is useful to my analysis of working-class women's resistances to the oppressive conditions in which they exist (6). She articulates the importance of recognizing within autobiographical narratives "participatory modes of value and consensus and the antagonistic modes of resistance, domination, and appropriation" (41). As she says, "all autobiographical 'moves' ... display the features of the two contexts, as cultural products in circulation with other cultural products ... and as articulations of participatory and antagonistic social relations" (40). In this context, we must, as Gilmore says, examine "the level of each text's engagement with the available discourses of truth and identity and the ways in which self-representation is constitutively shaped though proximity to those discourses' definition of authority" (12-13).

While I am interested in working-class women's agency, I believe it is important to recognize the severe limitations imposed on their ability to exercise agency. As Julia Swindells says, we cannot simply "[liberate] our sisters from

history--either by finding 'authentic' voices where these cannot exist, or by deciding, in our eagerness to liberate their texts from silence, that these sisters led liberated lives" (24). I want to resist a reductive binarism which sees these women as either oppressed or liberated. Understanding, as Foucault says, that "power is co-extensive with the social body" and that the interconnectedness of relations of power with "other kinds of relations (production, kinship, family, sexuality)" yields "a multiform production of relations of domination which are partially susceptible of integration into overall strategies," I look to these women's texts for the strategies they employed in their multiple resistances to power (*Power/Knowledge* 142). Specifically, I analyze working-class women's narratives for the ways in which dominant discourses of fallenness impacted their lives and the ways in which these women internalized, resisted, and struggled with these discourses. A close reading of working-class women's autobiographies reveals the impossibility of separating discourses of fallenness from the everyday lives of working-class women: narratives of fallenness legitimated wide-ranging coercive measures to police and domesticate working-class women, and, in one way or another, each of the women whose texts I analyze here defines herself against the tropes of prostitution prominent in the rhetoric of the 1800's.[58]

[58]Since I am particularly interested in reading narratives of fallenness in terms of their use in domesticating working-class women, I have excluded from this analysis several

The Victorian period is generally acknowledged to begin in 1830, the same year the Liverpool and Manchester Railway opened and two years before the middle-class backed Reform Bill of 1832 extended the right to vote to all males owning property worth £10 or more a year in rent. The period closes in 1901 with the death of Queen Victoria. But England was experiencing the economic upheaval of industrialization in the decades preceding the 1830's Reform Parliament, and the decades following Queen Victoria's death continued to play out the effects of Victorian legal and social reforms. Victorian efforts to domesticate working-class women were closely tied to both the consolidation of a middle-class capitalist power and to already entrenched religious reform and rescue discourses. Since I am interested in examining the effects of narratives of fallenness on working-class women's lives as well as analyzing their resistances to domesticating projects, I have chosen (from the few working-class women's self-representations available) a range of texts which span the

important texts which deserve mention. Harriet Wilson, one of the best known courtesans of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, published memoirs which provide a sometimes scathing account of her relationships with many of Britain's nobility. Wilson's upper-class liaisons, however, afforded her an upper-class lifestyle, and, interesting as the memoirs are, they do not directly bear on my analysis of the intersection of the discourses of prostitution and working-class women. There are also two important texts by American prostitutes, Nell Kimball and Mamie Pinzer, that are extremely interesting. Kimball's text details both the life of prostitution and her exercise of power through the considerable fortune she amassed as a madam; Mamie's details the complex power relations between a working-class "fallen" woman and an upper-class woman who "rescues" her.

beginning, middle, and end of the Victorian period. I begin with a pre-Victorian text, Mary Saxby's *Memoirs of a Female Vagrant,* which exposes both the differences between pre-Victorian and Victorian class and gender constructions and the framework out of which Victorian domesticating efforts grew. Next to this, I juxtapose Emma Smith's *A Cornish Waif's Story*. Published in 1954 about her childhood in late Victorian England, Smith's autobiography documents the success of Victorian legal, medical, and discursive efforts to domesticate working-class women. While Saxby's text looks forward to the Victorian domesticating project, Smith's looks back on it. Hannah Cullwick's *Diaries*, written between 1854 and 1873, spans the period of time in which state measures to regulate women's work, their use of public space, and their sexuality were unfolding. Positioned in the middle of the Victorian period, Cullwick's diaries look neither forward nor back, but show her ongoing negotiation of a world in which her class and gender definitions were being transformed. All of these texts reveal a complex relation to the power structures within which their authors lived and labored. Each of these women carved for herself a particular access to power within the possibilities open to her, an access to power that afforded a degree of freedom and autonomy not recognized in popular representations of fallen women.

Only two of the women--Saxby and Smith--technically fall into the category that would be recognized as "fallen."

Cullwick existed in the marginal and therefore suspect space of an unmarried working-class women. Saxby's narrative, published as part of a religious discourse advocating the reformation of sinners, is closely linked to confessional narratives. Her conversion narrative anticipates Victorian reform practices. While on one lever her text participates in the "confession" of sexual guilt, it also reveals a *pride* in and an on-going identification of herself as a "rebel," factors which subvert the genre of the confessional. This pride in her self-defined "rebel" identity points to her appropriation of religious discourses to resist domestication. Saxby was what Dickens described in *David Copperfield* as a "tramper," the very sort of women Police Constable Anniss says "is the most difficult class we have, because they get about in the fields and lanes at night ... [and] do a great deal of damage. ... They travel about as tinkers, &c., who do anything but work, and do a great deal of damage in communicating disease" (*RCI* 1871 22).

At the other end of the century, Smith's autobiography details the effects of Victorian tropes of fallenness on working-class women's lives and is thus an important document against which to read these tropes. She was raised in a penitentiary, and, though she abhorred sex and was abstinent until her marriage, she describes her entire life as shadowed by the assumption that she had been a prostitute. Smith's narrative is an open indictment of middle-class narratives of

fallenness. Her autobiography shatters the taboo of silence prohibiting her from speaking of her past in a penitentiary: far from being the confession of her *guilt*, Smith's text is a righteous proclamation of her *innocence*.

In between these, Cullwick's diaries afford a glimpse of the changing Victorian world. Cullwick wrote her diaries on the demand of her upper-class friend and eventual husband, Arthur Munby. Though her diaries are, in one sense, a confessional narrative that represent her manual labor for Munby's voyeuristic pleasure, in another sense, they secure her relationship to an upper-class man and thus enable a radical class transgression. By choosing to fulfill Munby's demand to write, Cullwick's confessional narrative works both as a *strategy* for securing her interests and as a *performance* for their relation. Cullwick's relation to Munby enabled her to avoid the physical, emotional, and psychological costs of working-class marriage and child-rearing and to save a substantial amount of money and live as an independent retired woman at a relatively early age. Like Saxby's, Cullwick's diaries are filled with the rhetoric of humble submission, but they also regularly point to her *pride* and indicate the *anger* she experiences from her subordinate position.

In marked contrast to their representations in novels and institutional discourses, the working-class women's narratives I examine challenge the legitimacy of middle-class representations of them. The lives they describe are very

different than literary representations in which sympathetically written fallen women are merely victims always about to throw themselves into the polluted rivers from which they seem to have arisen: these women's texts reveal the strategies with which they resisted institutions of power, the challenges they posed to these institutions, and the power they were able to exercise within their circumstances. In stark contrast to middle-class texts in which working-class women can tell only the story of their sexual guilt, each of these authors accesses the *word* and tells her *story*. These stories--stories of their independence, their resourcefulness, their desire, their ambition, discontent, anger--are an important indication of the threat underlying middle-class and institutional narratives of the fall and its punishment. They are a confrontation to the existing structures of power and indicate the threat working-class women posed to the stability of that power. In one way or another, these are all *undomesticable* women.

Mary Saxby's *Memoirs of a Female Vagrant*

Saxby's *Memoirs,* published through the Methodist association with which she was involved, were intended as an exemplary conversion narrative. According to one of the many editorial comments to Saxby's text, the facts of her life "afford considerable encouragement to benevolent efforts for the temporal and spiritual recovery of the most profligate

poor; and may teach the vilest characters among them not to abandon themselves to despair" (21). Themes of "temporal and spiritual recovery" featured largely in religious discourses which saw "the vagrant classes of the British poor" as "inferior in civilization to the Bedouin Arabs" (19). But a close reading of Saxby's *Memoirs* shows that, far from domesticating her, religious discourse enabled her to resist domestication as a working-class wife and mother confined to the sphere of the home. Religious discourse offers Saxby a positive ego-identity. Marked by a pride in her independence and ability to resist being "controlled," Saxby's "confession," even allowing for her self-prostrating religious rhetoric, reads rather more like a *triumph* than a *repentance*. Interestingly, her "rebel" self-representation structures her identity both before and after her religious conversion. She is just as much a rebel in her adult proselytizing as she was in her childhood "escapes" or her adolescent wanderings. She explains her childhood shuffling from one relative to another as a consequence of her "own perverse temper; which, because I had no parent, scorned to be under the controul of any of my friends, even at that early period" (1-2). We read her pride, too, in her disclosure that, despite "the many years that [she] wondered alone without a guide or a teacher," she retains the knowledge she received during her brief period at school (2). Saxby's "rebel" identity not only allows her to escape her father's early abuse, it also makes her the

privileged beneficiary of God's love and salvation. She praises the "patience and forbearance" of the God that strove with "such a daring rebel" (27). Saxby acknowledges that she was "full of pride and self" (60), and her belief in divine guidance is an extension of her early identity as a proud woman under nobody's control. Saxby's pride at being chosen for salvation is thus a logical extension of identity constructions in place long before her conversion.

Born in 1738, Saxby begins life as an abandoned child; her mother dies, her father leaves, and she is passed from relative to relative. Both her childhood and her adult life are characterized by a rejection of confinement and a desire for "freedom." Saxby begins a series of what she defines as "escapes" at the age of ten, shortly after her father returns and takes over her care. She recalls an episode when, wanting to see a fireworks display, she "escaped" to St. James's Park. Saxby recalls her punishment for this "excursion":

> Now my poor, dear, grieved parent, thought he would effectually humble my proud spirit. He shut me up in a lower room which faced the street, and chained me to the bed-post: the children I used to play with were permitted to look through the window, and mock and scoff at me; and I think that, for three days, I had no other food than a few dry crusts, soaked in some pot-liquor. (5)

Though Saxby recounts numerous such instances of horrifying abuse, her narrative emphasizes, not the *abuse*, but her *escape* from it. Such tactics, according to Saxby: "Instead of humbling [her] proud, perverse spirit ... [he] exasperated me to the highest degree" (5). Her father's abuse "sensibly

touched [her] proud nature; and [she] was determined, at all events, upon a final escape" (6).

Saxby does indeed "escape," and thus begins an itinerant life marked by intervals of hunger, deprivation, suffering--*and* periods of freedom, pleasure, and plenty. She takes up with one person after another, making her living variously by begging, singing, stealing, trading, and performing migrant farm work. In one of her earliest road companionships, she convinces the daughter of a woman who has taken her in to join her on the road:

> Her youngest daughter was about my age, and with her I soon contracted an intimacy. ... We agreed to go about together, singing ballads; and to this end we determined on separating from her mother. ... Being then wholly left to ourselves, without anyone to controul us, we ran wherever our blind fancy led us, into all sorts of company, singing in alehouses, at feasts and fairs, for a few pence and a little drink. (9)

Even at such a young age, Saxby prefers to "go about singing ballads" than be confined to a home. Her narrative differs significantly from literary representations of migrant women. In the first place, while she does in fact describe some of the conditions that became the melodramatic hallmarks of itinerant life--hunger, deprivation, suffering--the narrative also reveals a pleasure in unrestrained mobility and unstructured living. During one of her travels, she meets with a tribe of gypsies, "and one, in particular, was an exceeding good dancer." He "fascinated" her so much that she "needed little entreaty to go with them to their camp, which

contained several tents, with men, women, and children" (9). She lived with this tribe for over a year, and recalls that she "liked it very well" (10). The first sexual relationship she describes is with a man from this tribe, who, she says, "was the same young man that had allured me by his dancing. ... I loved him too well; and as he promised me marriage, consented to co-habit with him; in which sinful state I continued more than year" (10). Her narration shows her not only a willing but a desiring partner in this affair, and, at the time, her sexual union carries no stigma for her. Though by the time she writes her memoirs Saxby accepts her early informal sexual liaisons as "sinful," her narrative nevertheless insists that *at the time* she saw "no wrong" in her actions. Significantly, the religious discourse through which she writes became highly important to Victorian reform and rescue narratives. We can thus see Saxby's narrative as a precursor to Victorian narratives of the fall which represent the suffering and discursively enact a punishment of "fallen" women. But Saxby's narrative *also* belies the Victorian narratives of seduction it foreshadows. Victorian narratives feature women who are coerced into sex, suffer miserably for their sin, and die slow and painful deaths from humiliation, scorn, and shame. Not only does Saxby suffer no such consequence from her sexual unions, she has an illegitimate child by one man (she eventually marries the father of this child) and later cohabits with another, whom

she refuses to marry "on account of my poor child, whom I wished never to have a stepfather" (19). Though her third lover insists that they marry, she refuses "lest he should use the child ill afterwards; and as it was not then customary for travelers to marry, [she] saw no evil in it" (20).

Saxby practices serial monogamy, which was customary for women of her class.[59] Neither her series of informal sexual liaisons nor her illegitimate children pose a problem for her, her future husband, or her social circle. Her heterosexual relations are only one aspect of a complex identity structure which involves making money, traveling, rearing children, and, later, preaching. Her marital relation, far from being her primary mode of self-definition, is, next to her work, her children, and her religion, a relatively *minor* aspect of her identity structure. In fact, Saxby does not name her eventual husband--her second lover and father of the illegitimate child on whose behalf she refuses marriage to her third lover--until she narrates their imminent marriage. Up to this point, she refers to him as "the man from Kent."

In many ways, Saxby's narrative (which resembles eighteenth-century narratives such as Defoe's *Moll Flanders*)

[59]In fact, laments about informal sexual arrangements among the working-class permeate middle-class texts throughout the Victorian period. Social and charitable investigators distributing poor relief, police and public health examiners entering working-class homes, and religious organizations mobilizing conversion and reform efforts, all discuss the working-class's general disregard for legal marriage. We see similar complaints in modern discourses attributing the deterioration of the "family" to working-class immorality.

reminds us that the Victorian project of domesticating working-class women cut them off from outside interests, friends, and activities and left them isolated in their homes and at the mercy of their husbands' tempers. Functionally, this abandoned many women to the domestic violence inherent to gender hierarchies. In fact, Saxby's marital relationship is filled with the same violence and abuse that characterized her early life. She recalls an episode when, before they were married, John Saxby retrieved her from a second period of cohabitation with her gypsy lover, who, she says, was keeping her a virtual prisoner: "The man whom I had met with in Kent, finding out my situation, came and demanded me; ... challenged him to fight for me, conquered him, and took me away in triumph" (17). Far from being grateful, Saxby sees this as exchanging "one state of slavery for another" (17). She becomes pregnant, shortly after which John Saxby "goes for a soldier" and his mother and sister desert her. She takes up with another man, but John Saxby returns, finds her, and makes her promise to wait for him or he will kill her. Eventually she and John Saxby form a permanent union, but, as they are often in "places where the clergy refused to marry travelers; and at other times, we had not money enough to discharge the expense" (22), it is quite some time before this union is legalized. Eventually, Saxby insists on marriage, and, on Jan. 3, 1772, she and John Saxby were married.

Given the violence to which women were frequently subjected, Saxby had many reasons for preferring informal heterosexual arrangements to marriage. She did not perceive herself as violating sexual mores until after her conversion process began. In fact, she perceives herself as a "virtuous" woman. She recalls that: "Many a time, have I narrowly escaped being entirely ruined by wicked men: but as the Lord always gave me a strong aversion to the very name of a common prostitute, so he, and he alone, kept me from becoming one, even so early" (7). While *she* clearly identifies the "common prostitute" as a being with less agency than herself, even then the *law* made no distinction between Saxby's life style and prostitution. To the middle-class and its institutions (church, police, hospital, courts), her informal sexual unions and itinerant life-style mark her as a fallen women. Once, after befriending and taking lodging with a woman the police identified as a common prostitute, Saxby was arrested for prostitution and served six weeks in Bridewell. Saxby writes that:

> Being in her company, and having been seen with her in the market, the constable came in the night, obliged us to leave our bed, and secured us till morning; when we were taken before a justice, who committed us both to Bridewell, ordering us both to be repeatedly whipped. (16)

This pre-Victorian practice of arresting and confining women suspected of prostitution facilitated the passage of the Contagious Diseases Acts and the compulsory medical exam of women suspected of prostitution. Similarly, the religious and

reform discourse so important to both the proponents and opponents of state regulation of women's sexuality was in place long before the Victorian period. Indeed, Saxby was a target for moral reform from several quarters. The jail keeper at Bridewell and the midwife who delivered her twins presented her with religious tracts and tried to "reform" her. Over the course of several years, Saxby periodically embraces and then rejects religious discourses. During periods of hardship she considers religious conversion, but, after the immediate peril is over, "[she] returned to [her] former courses" (16). She refers to herself as a "traveler," and describes her life: "Our custom was, to go round the neighbouring villages, to sell our goods, and return at night" (25). While it was certainly a hard life, it seems that Saxby was not much inclined to the more settled life of domesticity that she at times says she desires. After her twins die in a fire, she is so upset that she has what she refers to as "a disorder in [her] head, that made [her] almost distracted," and "was resolved to have a home for [her] children; and, through mercy, [she] was enabled to fulfill this purpose." This domestic interlude lasts only a short time, though, for, as she says, "my vows and promises, nevertheless, were soon forgotten, when my trouble wore off ... I returned to my former evil practices, as the dog to his vomit. To obscene jests, filthy ribaldry, and profane swearing, I was grossly addicted" (27).

Interestingly, Saxby fully attaches to Methodism only *after* she experiences herself as oppressively confined to her husband's abuse and overwhelmed with the difficulties of working-class motherhood. In this sense, religious discourse offers her another kind of *escape* from the harsh conditions of her life. She eventually attaches to the Wesleyans, whose "discourses were leveled to [her] capacity" (33) and becomes a religious proselyte. Gagnier describes Saxby's text as a "true conversion narrative" and argues that:

> By the nineteenth century, conversion narrative worked in two contradictory ways. First, it reproduced the official ideology of the middle-class religious societies that published--and occasionally forged--such tracts; hardship in this life was necessary for redemption in the next. Second, it permitted the dream of a pilgrim's progress to people whose life-events were doomed to hopeless repetition--a dream that empowered the religious radicals, typically Methodist, whose ideology generated working-class movements. (152)

To the extent that a religious life of preaching afforded a refuge from the responsibilities of domesticity and seclusion with an undesirable mate, religious discourse was itself an empowering tool for many women. Saxby's responsibilities as mother and wife to an abusive husband would have given her ample cause to desire escape, that theme so prevalent from her childhood. When she is pregnant with her first set of twins, her husband "beat[s] [her]," "kick[s] [her] down," and "trie[s] to choke [her]"(23). Her labor for her next set of twins is so hard that she almost dies. It is after this delivery that she completes her religious conversion. From

this point on, her religious enthusiasm becomes the preoccupation of her life, and she "could not forbear telling all that were about [her], or came to see [her], what God had done for [her] soul" (35). Saxby's descriptions suggest that she uses her religious discourse as a means of escaping domestication. She characterizes her "journeys" preaching as "escapes" from the persecution she receives at home: "And oh, how glad was I, when out on a journey, from under the eye of my poor husband, that I might attend on the Word without distraction or opposition" (33). Her religious zeal and her disregard for the responsibilities of husband, children, and home "seemed only to stir up enemies from every quarter; ... [her] own family reported, that [she] was actually mad" (35). Faced with Saxby's total withdrawal from family responsibilities, her family calls the doctor, who "ordered all [her] books to be taken away" (37). After the death of one of her children, Saxby, distracted to the point of wishing her own death, remains confined to her room. She reports that her husband "was all this time usually drinking and swearing at an alehouse; and when he did come to me, which was but seldom, it was only to upbraid and threaten to throw me out of the window, if I did not get up and do for my family" (37). Given this set of domestic circumstances, evangelism offers her freedom from an oppressive domestic situation.

Saxby's *Memoirs* provide an important glimpse into the conditions of life for the poorest of working-class women.

They also reveal the conditions out of which the Victorian domesticating project grew. But, perhaps most importantly, they point to some of the key elements of the oppressive class and gender hierarchies working-class women negotiated, and chronicle the means by which Saxby resisted these oppressions and subverted religious discourse. Her confessional narrative, far from being merely the chronicling of her guilt, is in fact the shouting of her triumph. Saxby lived and wrote before the Methodists banned women's preaching and before the reform discourse (which *enabled* Saxby to *avoid* domestication) had helped to fully form Victorian legal and medical discourses and practices domesticating working-class women. Living and writing at the other end of the spectrum about her childhood in late-Victorian London, Smith's *A Cornish Waif's Story* documents the largely successful domestication of working-class women.

Emma Smith's *A Cornish Waif's Story*

Emma Smith's autobiography, *A Cornish Waif's Story*, narrates the life of an illegitimate child born in a Victorian workhouse and shuffled between relatives and the workhouse until she was old enough to be "put out to work." Smith passed her earliest years between the workhouse in Redruth and, when her mother sent them money and they could afford to keep her, her grandparents' house. She was eventually sent to live with itinerant beggars, the Pratts, with whom she

traveled, singing and begging. Except for a brief interval at the Salvation Army Home and an unsuccessful attempt to live with a rag-and-bone merchant, Smith remained with the Pratts until she was twelve years old and finally ran away for good. Smith recalls the horrors of life with the Pratts: Mr. Pratt molested her; she was always physically and emotionally exhausted; she suffered emotionally from having been abandoned by her mother. But her story is particularly important for the detailed information it provides about life in a penitentiary. The text also clearly articulates reform narratives' ideological work of domesticating working-class women.

Gagnier describes Smith's life as "a sequence of non-correspondence to middle-class norms" (49). Hers is "a 'hysterical' narrative indicating her nonadjustment to married life and maternity. She is as unwilling a wife as a waif" (50). While this is certainly true, it is equally true that, by the time she publishes her autobiography in 1954, Smith has thoroughly internalized the Victorian ideal of domesticity. She may be both an "unwilling wife and waif," but she desperately craves the ideal of a domestic *home* with a guardian angel *mother*, neither of which were available to her. The narrative reiterates Smith's suffering from this lack and her sense of loss, both of which she blames on her *mother's* failure: her mother bears two illegitimate children, and then marries a man who does not want to be a father to another

man's children. But Smith's mother's tale seems to be more or less typical of Victorian working-class women. She has children by a man she expects to marry. He goes to war, she believes he is killed, she meets and marries somebody else. Because Smith clings so tightly to the ideal of a happy childhood in a nurturing family, and suffers so greatly from her experience of a ruptured family structure, we must ask if she does not suffer, in part at least, from the success of discourses disseminating bourgeois ideals of mother and family into working-class culture. Gagnier argues that there is an especially high cost of "bourgeois--especially familial or gendered--ideology to women and men who were not permitted bourgeois lives" (45). The cost to Smith of internalizing middle-class ideology was indeed high. The domestic ideal is not only the script through which she interprets her own life, it is the script through which she reads her mother as a failed domestic woman and the source of all of her childhood suffering. Smith writes that "most of the blame for what [she] suffered and endured lies at" her mother's door. (13)

Next to Smith's unrelenting condemnation of her mother, her equally unrestrained adoration of her grandfather seems skewed. He "figures in many of [her] happiest memories of [her] early days" (20). Her grandfather was blind, had no means of subsistence, and was proud of having sired and baptized twenty-three children. While her grandfather could not support the children he helped to bring into the world,

his children were all expected to contribute to their subsistence. Smith's mother began working in the tin mines almost as soon as she could walk; all of the children helped to support a household ruled by extreme poverty. While Smith never reproaches her grandfather for his inability to care for his children, she blames her mother for having two illegitimate children before marrying a man who did not want to be burdened with children that were not his own. Smith's angry blame of her mother and her loving protectiveness towards her grandfather expose both the pervasiveness of the ideology of domesticity and its punitive quality: Smith has thoroughly internalized the belief that a *good* woman bears only the legitimate children of a lawful husband, and that the *bad* woman is fully responsible for children's suffering and domestic chaos. Smith does not evenly distribute the *blame* for the harsh conditions of her life--it is her *mother's* fault.[60]

After running away several times, Smith was eventually sent to Mrs. Butler for placement in a penitentiary. Smith recalls:

[60]Smith's unequivocal condemnation of her mother reflects the emergence of Victorian psychological and social discourses constructing mother-child relations. Her text reveals a familiarity with these discourses--her writing was prompted by a "friend who happens to be a sociologist" (13). What's more, the uneven distribution of blame which we can recognize in Smith's text illuminates for us the ideological snares such discourses still pose for us today. We have not yet moved beyond configurations of mothers as fully responsible for all of the ills from which their children might suffer.

> I had always stood in great awe of the little black-veiled lady, and now I recalled how often I had heard of girls, "bad girls," from our street, who had suddenly disappeared. I had never known these young women, but a neighbor would drop in and tell Mrs. Pratt about them. A girl would just vanish, then it would be reported that Miss Butler had sent her to a home for bad girls. (114)

Smith, now at the mercy of religious and charitable reformers, must be defined as a "fallen" woman in order to be "rescued." Miss Butler's first move to "help" her is thus to take her to a doctor for a medical certificate verifying that she has been "ruined" by a man. The doctor refuses to examine Smith, who was dirty, neglected, and had recently suffered from chicken pox. Nevertheless, he issued a certificate verifying that she had had intercourse, the criterion for her "ruin." In order to be *eligible* for "help" from state, religious, or charitable institutions, Smith had to be *named* as "fallen," a naming which conflates all unmarried non-virgins, including "prostitutes" and victims of "seduction" or rape. She suffered the consequences of this definition for the rest of her life. But she was only twelve years old when Ms. Butler "rescued" her. According to her narrative, the doctor *did not* perform a medical examination. She told nobody of Pratt's sexual abuse. On what basis, then, did Ms. Butler conclude that she was "ruined"? The circumstances Smith narrates suggest that the definition of fallenness rested as much on *poverty* and *social marginality* as it did on sexual activity. In this sense, *redemption* meant being *restored* to an appropriate *social* position, which, for working-class women,

invariably meant *service* in middle-class homes and institutions.

Shortly after this, Smith was sent to a convent penitentiary in Bramshot. Before being sent to the penitentiary, Miss Butler tells her that she must "be very grateful for this chance ... for it is a beautiful home and you will be taught many useful things. Why, some day, you might even be a servant like Selina" (116). Smith wryly comments that, "had Miss Butler said that some day "she "might be a duchess she could not have made it sound more ambitious." Within the discourse of redemption, a servant's life is the crowning achievement for a young woman of Smith's class. But, practically, the twelve-year-old Smith realizes that:

> After all, Selina was a lady, I thought. And if I became like her, I should be very grand. Look how she wore that little cap on the top of her head. She made it stick up like that herself, for I had seen her starch and iron it. Then that lively white embroidered apron with the streamers at the back! She never smiled or talked to me, certainly. But that was, I supposed, because she was so important. One of the few remarks Selina had made to me was that once she herself had been "rescued" by Miss Butler. ... On the whole, then, things could have been worse. (116)

Smith enters the convent penitentiary, if not enthusiastically, at least willingly. This, as she says, affects the rest of her life, which she lives under the shadow of being identified as a prostitute. She writes:

> It was just taken for granted that I was a young prostitute. Had I not run away from Pratt when I did, I should almost certainly have become such a one in time. It could almost be said, I think, that I had left just in the nick of time. As it

> was, I was no more a prostitute than Dickens' Oliver Twist was a thief, if I may draw upon a charter of fiction to illustrate what I mean. Yet here I was placed in this category, and indirectly it has affected my whole life. (118)

The necessity of naming Smith a "prostitute" before she could be "rescued" suggests that *to help* a poor woman *required* constructing her as a *victim*. But, in Smith's case, the very ground upon which her victimization was constructed exacerbated the *real* sexual abuse to which Pratt had subjected her. As we have already seen, even narratives of seduction rested upon earlier beliefs in woman's sexually threatening body. Thus, to say that she had been "ruined" by a man held her responsible for (and *guilty* of) sexual activity; assumed that she was corrupted and could in turn corrupt others; and imposed upon her the taboo of silence prohibiting her from ever speaking of her past. To name Smith as "ruined"--which implies "fallen," "prostitute," "corrupted"--consequently *misnames* the sexual abuse Pratt subjected her to: it holds her responsible for a "fall" she *did not* experience and prevents her speaking about the sexual abuse she *did* experience.

Though Smith thoroughly internalizes the ideology of domesticity, her narrative also subverts that ideology. Her biography is, fundamentally, a violation of the taboo of silence which organizes her life. Silence was the governing theme of the penitentiary. For misconduct, inmates could "be put into silence" (120); "They all undressed in dead silence" (121); and "from the hour of compline to the hour after Mass

was celebrated the following morning, dead silence all throughout the house was strictly observed" (125). Smith recalls that: "The meals were silent, except for Sunday teatime; and at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun, we were allowed to talk at dinnertime" (127). But worse, even, then the silence which organized their days, punctuated by strictly regulated intervals of sociality, was the taboo of speaking of one's past. For the sexually transgressive woman, the only past to speak of is a past of sin and guilt, and to speak of this past is seen as corrupting. Only a guilty woman has a past, and the guilty woman must be prevented from contaminating others by communicating the guilt of her past:

> It was strictly forbidden to talk of one's past life, so that to no one had I ever confided about Pratt or my singing expeditions. Now that the time had arrived for me to make my first confession, I was weighed down with all these sordid memories. I was innocent of any sin. I was sinned against, but at that age I could not sort it all out. So I went to the confessional, and still I held my tongue about the biggest worry of all. I still did not know how to explain what had happened. The fact that I was never questioned about my past life by my teacher, made it impossible for me to take her into my confidence and ask her help. I was burdened the whole time now with an awful sense of guilt which made me feel older than my years. (130)

Smith does eventually make a full confession, and this confession, like her autobiography, can be read as an accusation against the imposition of silence and an indictment against what she has suffered. The confession itself is less an admission of her sin than a long pent-up naming of abuse. In this sense, Smith's confession subverts the Christian

confessional--her confession *breaks* the silence of sexual abuse. The belief in the sexual woman's contaminating guilt founds the injunction against speaking, and Smith's text clearly rejects the definition of her as guilty or contaminating. She declares: "I was innocent of any sin. I was sinned against." As such, her "confession," like her autobiography, breaks silence and speaks, not her guilt, but her innocence. And this text is clearly angry at the injunction to silence and the guilt assigned to her. Smith frankly accuses her teacher (to whom she is deeply attached) of burdening her with "an awful sense of guilt" by making it "impossible" for Smith to take her teacher into her confidence (130). Smith's confession is thus a very different genre than the confession of novels or institutional documents. Her confession is an angry accusation, an indictment, and an effort to hold the society that makes her suffer responsible for its treatment of her.

This injunction to silence, her anger with and accusation against it, extends long past her life in the penitentiary:

> It was impressed upon me before I left that I was never to talk about the Home or let anyone know where I had come from. Now, indeed, my troubles began ... now here at last it was rubbed into me that it was something to be very ashamed of that I had been an inmate of the Home at Bramshot. It was just as if a girl had been told that her school or college was to be something which she could never discuss among her friends, as it was a matter of disgrace and shame that she had ever been there. (146)

First, Smith's life *before* Bramshot was erased, and then her life *in* Bramshot was erased, always to be hidden behind the silent secrecy of what was made her shame. She attributes many of the difficulties she had adjusting to life outside of Bramshot to this injunction of silence under which she was expected to live: "Looking back, I think I might have done quite well at the vicarage had I not been worried with the problem of having to keep silent about the very place and people I most longed to discuss" (148). She is caught in the impossible situation of simultaneously wearing the insignia accusing her of prostitution and being forbidden to make any defense on her own behalf. She laments: "My outdoor clothing, all black and plain, told all and sundry that I had come from a Home" (145). Since her "clothing at once stamped [her] as a Home girl ... what was more natural than that people of the village should be curious as to where [she] had come from, and as [she] could never satisfy their curiosity the worst was conjectured" (146). She is angry at the stigma she carries, she is angry at being labeled as guilty when she maintains a firm belief in her innocence, and she is angry at the injustices under which she has labored:

> 'Why, oh Why,' I kept asking myself, 'had my life been so full of stigmas?--first illegitimacy, then my place of birth being a workhouse, and now for the rest of my life I must always be trying to hide the fact that I had spent years in a penitentiary.' (148)

Smith's text, punctuated with her anger, is, like Saxby's, also threaded with the desire to escape. She

resists being placed where she does not want to be. Just as she had run away from Pratt when a child, she ran away from her first position as a domestic servant:

> My early life of wandering began to have the effect of making me restless, and suddenly I made up my mind that I would run away again. I had been in my place a few months so that, in spite of the fact that I was a perfect fool where money was concerned, never having learned how to handle it, I had got a few shillings in my purse. I had to fetch the milk each morning from a long distance, and one morning instead of getting the milk, I walked to the railway station and booked a seat to Plymouth. I determined to go to Grandfather. (148)

Her grandfather had of course been notified of her "escape," and, when Smith arrived, her welcome was less than warm. Her grandfather's new wife advised her to go to the refuge, which she did. She was soon placed in another position as domestic servant, a situation she liked even less than the previous one. Smith recalls that "the lot of a prisoner would be infinitely preferable to ... life in that household" (151). From this position, too, she escapes:

> One day, in a frenzy, I escaped through the back gate in my working dress, just as I was. For a while I looked about me, wondering where to turn. Every policeman I saw frightened me because I thought they must know I had run away from my place. (151)

Smith's narrative thus exposes the damaging effects of the narratives of fallenness through which she is defined and her anger with and resistance to the effects of these narratives on her life. But it also reveals the ways in which fictional narratives inflect her reception by others and

her understanding of herself. Smith's narration of her experience as parlour-maid in the Thomas house could have come straight from a Dickens' novel. Smith writes:

> The daughters of the house treated me in the oddest way until they became accustomed to me. If I met one of them on the stairs, she would look at me suspiciously, as if she thought I might have the silver concealed about my person. I am quite sure they thought it their duty to watch me closely in case I stole or committed some other grave offense. (165)

Of course, as David tells Dora in *David Copperfield,* it *was* the middle-class's duty to watch the working-classes. The Thomas daughters are doing nothing other than enacting the instruction David gives to Dora when he takes her to task for not properly supervising their servants, a failure which, he says, causes them to steal. Smith's text, though, provides more painful examples of the intertextual discursive production of working-class women's subjectivity than this relatively minor incident of middle-class surveillance. Novels offered an imaginary reprieve from her life and a fantasy of another identity, as well as a mirror of her past life and a reflection of who she believed she was. She thinks of Pratt as Fagin, and she compares her painful misnaming as a prostitute to Oliver Twist's unjust naming as a thief. Smith imagines herself a character in a book; the Thomas daughters imagine that she needs surveillance; nuns, employers, and inmates of the convent penitentiary all imagine Smith to be a prostitute. And Smith suffers the consequences of this discursive construction of the working class in general and

fallen women in particular: she is shamed, humiliated, silenced, an object of incarceration, surveillance, and detention.

In many ways Smith's narrative recites the effects of the interweaving social, political, legal, and fictional discourses working to domesticate working-class women. But the narrative also points to Smith's resistance to domestication. She identifies with her teachers at Bramshot, she does not want to enter the labor market outside of Bramshot, and she never expresses any desire for a mate or family. Convent life fulfilled Smith's desire for love and the companionship of women, and at no point does she ever record desiring male companionship, a husband, children, or the trappings of domesticity. Having entered the penitentiary at twelve, she would have been expected to go out to work after two years, at the age of fourteen. While admittedly young, this was the age at which most working-class girls would normally have found employment. Not only does Smith earn the protection of women at the convent long enough to have her entry into the work-force delayed for some time, when she *does* go out to work, she runs away from her posts and eventually returns to Bramshot, which is precisely where she wants to be.

Smith leaves Bramshot only reluctantly to take the position of parlour-maid to the Thomas family, but soon leaves this post and enters a convent as a postulant. After only

three months there, she comes to the conclusion that "it was just my love for the sisters at Bramshot and the undue influence of sister Kate that I had confused with a call from God" (167). The Reverend Mother and the Chaplain of the convent she had entered tell her that her vocation "is to be a wife and mother" (167). This fills Smith with visions of "a little home, furniture, curtains, a cradle." She also "tried to imagine (only this was more difficult) a man in slippers" (167). Though the cottage and child could easily fill the gap for a nurturing space in which there was somebody to love and be loved by, she never once imagines a *husband* as the source of or object to love. And, in fact, her marriage is anything but a romance enacted. When she returns to her post with the Thomas's, she finds that "the gardener that used to work for them before the war was now coming back." Mrs. Thomas tells Smith: "I expect you'll fall in love with him" (167). As Smith recalls:

> With these and the Reverend Mother's recent words still ringing in my ears, what more natural than that a few months after the return of this gardener, we were engaged to be married. ... After a year of quiet courtship, during which time I visited his people in a delightful thatched cottage in Essex, we were married from my employers' house. So then I became a wife. (167)

This singularly un-romantic account of her transition to wife speaks of more than Smith's indifference to that unimaginable man in slippers, it tells of the ideological work of the bourgeoisie. The text suggests that Smith constructs herself according to the wife/mother identity into which she

had recently been indoctrinated, but that this construction is very much an imposition from the outside, an imposition that she resents. She says: "I think it was suggested so often that I should fall in love with this gardener that in the end I think I believed myself in love" (168). She cannot remember much of the courtship or her reasons for marrying: "If I have spoken very little of our courtship, it is because I hardly know myself how it all came about" (168). The gardener is never named; Smith's husband is of so little importance to the text that he need not be given proper noun status, in marked contrast to her love for and naming of Sisters Helen and Kate. Smith's text also specifies the relation between wife and commodity in the urban industrial economy. She remembers "a remark one of [her] young ladies made to [her] one day: she said--'If you have two servants, a man and a woman, the thing to do is to marry them up. Then you have two servants for the price of one" (168). The narrative is thus quite aware of the *economy* of working-class marriage and equally aware that the profit is to the middle class, not to the working-class woman:

> Our early married life was not ideally happy. I had been used to such large numbers for so many years. Now I was missing much of which I felt a need, though I cannot put a name to it. My husband was an excellent gardener, but when not at work, he usually slept; so that at first married life seemed to me a very lonely existence. (168)

Smith's autobiography, when juxtaposed with Saxby's, illuminates the success of Victorian efforts to domesticate

working-class women. While Saxby's text points to the emerging legal, medical, popular and fictional discourses and practices of the Victorian domesticating project, Smith's text, so imbued with these discourses, shows us their fruition. It also shows us the *costs* of these discourses and practices to working-class women's lives. In contrast, Hannah Cullwick's *Diaries*, which span the middle of the Victorian period, show us one woman's strategies for negotiating these changes in working-class women's class and gender definitions.

Hannah Cullwick's Diaries

While Saxby's narrative prefigures changes in Victorian constructions of gender and class, and Smith's reflects these changes, Hannah Cullwick's *Diaries* chart her struggle negotiating an identity within an urban industrial economy. Cullwick was a Victorian maid-servant who, for fifty-four years, was secretly involved with a gentleman, Arthur Munby. (They "courted" for the first eighteen and were married for thirty-six). Her diaries span the years 1854 to 1873 (the years before their marriage) and chronicle her work in service as well as their relationship.[61] Several recent works have

[61]There have been several important analyses of Cullwick's diaries in the last several years. Liz Stanley, editor of Cullwick's published diaries, sensitively explores the intricacies of the Cullwick/Munby relationship and points to the important ways that Cullwick used her diary writing to control her relationship to Munby. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, in *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, draw upon Cullwick's diaries in their analysis of lowness, dirt, and Victorian culture. Anne McClintock in *Imperial*

analyzed Cullwick's subversion of class and gender through her relationship to Munby. Most significantly, Cullwick's relationship to Munby transgresses class bounds and enables her to resist domestication as a working-class wife and mother.[62] In particular, Langland argues that Cullwick stabilizes her "class and gender identity" through the

Leather provides a detailed and illuminating psychoanalysis of the fetishism and sadomasochism around which Cullwick and Munby organized their relationship. Leonore Davidoff, in "Class and Gender in Victorian England: The Diaries of Arthur J. Munby and Hannah Cullwick," explores the various class and gender transgressions Cullwick's diaries reveal. Most recently, Elizabeth Langland's *Nobody's Angels* analyzes Cullwick's diaries for the social semiotics of class and gender.

[62]Cullwick's experience with one of her employers, Miss Margaret Henderson, details the Victorian belief in the middle-class's responsibility for the moral supervision of the working-classes. Miss Margaret tells Hannah "I heard a sermon last night which made me feel that my servants' souls are in my charge & I must say I can't understand about you. I shd like to know more of your history" (191). Thus charged with the spiritual development of their servants, employers like Miss Henderson demanded that their servants, like their children, answer to them for their time and their conduct. The strict supervision of working-class women employed in middle-class homes was one of the means by which the middle-class inculcated their values into the working-classes. Any suspicious activity servants displayed must be explained, and "immoral" behavior was grounds for instant dismissal. This moral surveillance posed problems for Cullwick throughout all of her years in service. Cullwick's employers frequently found her conduct suspicious, and she was accused several times of improper behavior with Munby. Her secret relationship to Munby required that she find time to meet with him, and she was often in the position of not wishing to explain her whereabouts. Moreover, she particularly disliked having to ask permission to go out. Her fellow servants and middle-class employers even found the diaries she kept for and regularly mailed to Munby suspicious. She was twice dismissed from positions because her employers thought her relationship to Munby was not "respectable."

"racially inflected discourse of degradation and dirt," and that "the racial inflections of her identity ... served the important function of making unique her commonplace inscription as working-class woman, domestic servant" (216-7). Similarly, McClintock argues that Cullwick refuses "the social abjection of her labor and domestic dirt" by "exhibiting, of her own stubborn volition, the public evidence of women's domestic dirt, banished by Victorian decree to kitchen and back-corridor, cellar and garret--the architecture of the unseen" (149). McClintock identifies Cullwick's and Munby's "profound and mutual involvement in a variety of fetish rituals: slave/master (S/M), bondage/discipline (B/D), hand, foot and boot fetishisms, washing rituals, infantilism (or babyism), cross-dressing, and a deep and mutual fascination with dirt" (138). Their S/M scripts are an "economy of conversion" in which:

> The paraphernalia of S/M (boots, whips, chains, uniforms) is the paraphernalia of state power, public punishment converted to private pleasure. S/M plays social power backward, visibly and outrageously staging hierarchy, difference and power, the irrational, ecstasy, or alienation of the body, placing these ideas at the center of Western reason. S/M thus reveals the imperial logic of individualism and refuses it as fate, even though it does not finally step outside the enchantment of its own magic circle. (143)

Clearly, Cullwick's diaries are a strategy and a performance which reveal the means by which she secured her relationship to Munby, achieved a positive ego-fulfillment in her working-class identity, and obtained the financial means

with which to retire early and live, as she always dreamed she might, independently in her own cottage. But the diaries also reveal crucial ruptures in her self-construction. I am interested in reading these ruptures for indications of Cullwick's desires, her resistance to middle-class efforts to control her life, and evidence of the anger she felt at her subordination. In one of her later letters to Munby, she writes:

> I know you love me passionately as a servant, & it's a noble as well as a Christian like thing to do, but we cannot write it all over again (about it I mean). There's two sides to it, the dark side and the bright side--you love me but are forced to hide me, through fear of the world, & I must live alone or do again my will, & tho' I tell everyone I talk to as I've always been a servant & how much I like the work, you know I have suffer'd enough through it to make me hate the name. (296-7)

One of the things Cullwick suffered most from as a domestic servant was the anxiety of displacement. Like Smith, she internalizes middle-class ideologies of home and family, but, as with most working-class women, these structures are unavailable to her. Her narrative is marked by a pervasive desire for the security a middle-class home represents. Forced to leave her mother at the age of eight and enter service, Cullwick's life-long pursuit was for a restoration of the early love and security she felt with her mother. She wishes that she "had a home to go to at Christmas" (184) and suffers throughout her life from the depression of displacement of a life of service in o*ther people's homes*: as an orphaned domestic servant, she *belongs* nowhere. Thinking

of her and her siblings' plight, Cullwick writes: "Poor orphans as we was left, & still are--at the mercy of strangers for a home, so whatever I may save I feel poor & unable to do what I shd like to either for myself or them" (191). During her first years of service (and especially after the deaths of both her mother and father), Cullwick recalls: "I felt lonely and began to wish I had somebody to love me again, & that after all it wasn't wicked to take a sweetheart as I'd always thought" (39). Ironically, it is this very desire for a home and a sense of belonging that first motivates her relationship to Munby. Cullwick writes: "I made up my mind that it was best & safest to be a slave to a *gentleman*, nor wife & equal to any vulgar man" (273). Choosing to be a *gentleman's slave* instead of a *workingman's wife* makes sense in light of Cullwick's own experience with working-class poverty and insecurity. She, like her brothers and sisters, was sent out to work early; her parents died while she was very young and in service, and she was not even allowed to attend their funeral; she witnessed the suffering, anxiety, and deprivation of working-class couples struggling to make homes and raise families. In this light, Cullwick's rejection of the working-class wife and mother identity is a logical corollary to her desire for a home and security. Cullwick's observations of her family and the lives of people she knows suggest that marriage and children *jeopardize* working-class women's security. She writes: "That is the worse o' poor folks, they *will* get

married young & it makes me angry, 'cause there's so much poverty & trouble on trouble & confusion comes with it generally. However I suppose they *will* please themselves after all & it must be left alone" (238). Similarly, Cullwick both feels sorry for and judges as foolish her friend Tilly, who "used to be smart & proud & come to work at dressmaking at Mrs. Fosters till she acted foolishly & was *big*, & in this miserable room *waiting*" (45).

Not only does Cullwick refuse the insecurity and exploitation specific to working-class motherhood, she also expresses a desire for the respect of a middle-class subject position. While the diary is heavily invested in constructing an identity that exalts manual labor and domestic service, there are moments when this discourse breaks down and reveals Cullwick's desire to transgress certain class bounds (a desire which her relation to Munby covertly enacts). For example, when Munby unexpectedly visits Cullwick during one of her infrequent trips to her native Shropshire, Cullwick writes: "Massa turn'd up the street with me where the standings was & I ask'd him to give me a fairing. It was almost like as if he was an equal--there, & then. How I wish it could o' lasted so!" (225). This particular diary entry consciously acknowledges the desire, veiled in so many other entries, to be Munby's equal.[63] Additionally, in an entry made shortly

[63]One might construe this passage as suggesting that Cullwick desires an equality in which Munby comes down to her class. It makes little difference if the movement to equality

after her return from their honeymoon trip to France, Cullwick finds herself dissatisfied with her treatment as a servant. She writes to Munby: "I miss'd the politeness I'd bin used to in France" (267). Cullwick attributes this politeness to the good manners of the French which seem to her so striking next to the rudeness of her native Englishmen. She does not attribute the *difference* in her treatment to the fact that, in France, she entered society as Munby's legitimate wife and a *lady*, while, in England, she ran errands and performed services for Munby as his *servant*. While Cullwick's diaries continue to maintain her desire to be nothing more than "Massa's slave" and his "only servant," the text also reveals her preference for the *treatment* she receives as a lady.

Langland argues that Cullwick's self-definition (culturally constituted around "manual labor, drudgery and dirt as signifiers of her value") left her completely "alienated from the signifying practices of the middle class; to be a lady was, for her, to be without identity" (220-21). Thus, when Munby requests that she perform as a lady, her identity breaks down. This split is painfully clear when Cullwick writes:

> Of the two I'd choose to be dirty & to clean the closet tho', because there's no seeming to be what one isn't in this. And that when I'm with M. & have to remember I'm in disguise it would be no

is a move up by Hannah or a move down by Munby: the passage is at least clear that the desire is *for* equality, *not*, as suggested in so many other passages, for her subservience to Munby.

> wonder if I felt conscious & ashamed of myself as being *unfit*, & knowing I was a servant myself all the while the chambermaids or waiters bow'd to me & call'd me 'Madam' (277).

This entry, like the one in which she expresses the desire to be Munby's equal and the one in which she prefers the "polite" treatment she received while in society as a "lady," reveals the anxiety of her subordination. The preference she expresses for being "dirty" and cleaning is founded upon the desire to be valued for what she is: she would choose to be dirty because she does not have to seem what she isn't. When she performs as a lady, she must always be conscious that it *is* a performance, and the performance highlights the discrepancy between her "real" class position and that of a lady. It is thus not so much the privilege of being treated as a lady that Cullwick rejects as her consciousness that the treatment is contingent upon a deception, a masquerade which assumes her inferiority. Thus, while Cullwick's diaries are certainly part of a scripted performance which, by exalting the most degrading aspects of her labor, allowed her to construct a subject position from which she derived a sense of power in and control over her life, they are also a revelation of her desire for social equality and respect.

Just after her 30th birthday, Cullwick writes:

> I am thirty years old this month--must be quite a woman now, though I don't feel any different than I ever did except in feeling lower in heart I think, for I've bin a servant now 20 years or more. Always the lowest kind, but I think different about it now a good deal than I did ten years ago 'fore I knew Massa. He has taught me, though it's been

> difficult to learn thoroughly, the beauty in being nothing but a common drudge & to bear being despised by others what don't have to work the same way. I have hardly ever met wi' a *servant* yet who wasn't ashamed o' dirty work & who wouldn't be glad to get out of it for something they think is *better*, but *I* wouldn't get out of it if I could, nor change from being Massa's slave for anything else I know of. I've ben a slave now 9 years & worn the chains & padlocks 6 years--I don't hide 'em now from Mary for she saw 'em every night at Brighton this time. (126)

While Cullwick maintains that she wouldn't "get out" of service if she could, she also records that she feels "lower in heart" than she ever has. And, while she "think[s] different" about service now than she did before Munby showed her "the beauty in being nothing but a common drudge & to bear being despised by others what don't have to work the same way," she also records that this has been "difficult to learn thoroughly." Indeed, we are left suspecting that Cullwick never does quite learn this "lesson." In fact, it is possible to read Cullwick's discourse embracing her "dirt" and "drudgery" as invested with the *pride* of humility as an *achievement*. Like Saxby, Cullwick can find a positive identity value in a religious discourse which privileges poverty and hard work. While she can exercise no control over the material and class conditions into which she was born, embracing the religious discourse in which Christ loves the humble, and self-sacrificing work earns eternal love and salvation, invests her working-class identity with a power unavailable to her in any immediate material way. What's more, within Cullwick's self-construction as the lowest of

working drudges, humility is positively valued, but *vulgarity* is not. Cullwick consistently separates herself from her working-class counterparts, perceiving herself as superior in judgment, sensibility, and values. When she finds herself constrained to take work in an establishment that does not meet her standard of respectability, she writes:

> I could see myself cleaning the doorsteps of a vulgar London lodging house in a street full of nothing but the same thing, & the servants of the rest looking as common & vulgar & low as the houses & them who kept them, for they wore ribbons & tiny caps or none at all on hair done up as fashionably as possible. So I did feel rather vex'd to be put on a level with them as it were. (56)

So, while she may be *humble*--and her humility is conditional, her pride fierce--she is not *vulgar*. But even this self-construction cannot always ward off the despair of a life laboring in other people's service. At one particularly low point, Cullwick describes coming down "to the wretched-looking kitchen & I felt so sick & bad from so much dirt & hard work. I felt that I *couldn't* do any more till I'd bin out & forgot it a bit" (171). In this same entry she asks her sister Polly if she would ever like to "live a lady's life" (172). Polly says that she would not, and Cullwick replies:

> Neither would *I*, but still there was so many nice things they could hear & see & understand & do what we never could. ... If service could be made as happy as it might be & I could get out when I wanted without asking leave & the rest of it I shd never wish for anything else. (172)

This entry, which seems to speak her contentment with a servant's life, voices that service is *not* as "happy as it might be"; that she *cannot* get out when she likes without asking leave; and that she *would like* "to hear & see & understand & do" what ladies do.

Just as Cullwick cannot completely repress her desire for middle-class subject status, she never completely identifies herself as Munby's "slave." She catches herself before referring to Munby as "Massa" in her aunt's presence, writing that she "daren't finish cause my aunt doesn't know I call him that" (222). And, after a serious fight with Munby (prompted by Cullwick's anger at Munby's *display* of his superiority over her) she does not want to tell her sister Ellen about the fight. She records that "I shd be ashamed to tell her too, that M. had expected me to call him 'Sir'" (256). Thus, Cullwick's investment in a servant/slave identity as a means of legitimating and positively valuing her labor coexists with her resistance to and rebellion against class subjection. Her text reveals a pervasive anger at being denied the agency and value of middle-class identity. Clearly, Cullwick has to feel that her *service* was *consensual*, something she *chooses* to do. When she is confronted with the *forced* nature of her service, she rebels. She could aggressively assert her rights to her employers and to Munby, and responds angrily to overtly controlling measures. Her anger at this control is evident in an entry made after Miss Henderson attempted to make Cullwick

stay in on an evening for which she had obtained permission to go out:

> I suppose she saw a little temper in me, the same as I saw in her, for she said, '*Hannah*, you forget your place,' I said, 'No, ma'am, I don't, but it puts me out after I've got leave, & put straight, to be stopp'd for nothing. ... I come downstairs feeling very angry & vex'd. (164)

When Munby seems to take her employers' side after this episode, Cullwick is just as angry with him as she is with them. Her righteous defense of her conduct and her demand to have her agency recognized confronted Munby with the fact that the control he thought he exercised over her was his own fiction. She writes:

> I was very tired & I felt rebelious rather, as if I had bin *play'd* with, & annoy'd too, tho' I didn't care for having had warning to leave. Therefor I couldn't bear for M. To take their part again me, & I told Massa how it was to feel--a great big wench & strong as I am, as could *crush* a weak thing like Miss Margaret is, with one hand (tho' of course I *wouldn't*) & she must know that, for her to *trifle* with me about going out, when I'd got leave too. And *play* with me as if I was a child & unkindly too, especially when it was to see M--I *must* o' spoke up, it'd a bin cowardice to a degree to have took it quietly when I meant otherwise & I *wasn't* rude nor insolent. (165-6)

Cullwick's angry defense of herself and her rights is finally too much for either Munby's or her fantasy constructions to bear. Her construction of her service as consensual breaks down when confronted by the coercive power Munby can exercise over her. Similarly, Munby's construction of Cullwick as his humble servant breaks down in the face of her anger. Their relationship almost ends after a fight which

occurs shortly after Cullwick becomes Munby's full-time servant. Munby becomes angry that Cullwick does not address him as 'sir' when another barrister's clerk is present. Cullwick has "no idea any one was above likely to be listening," and perceives Munby's conduct as "showing off," which puts her "temper up to its highest." She writes:

> I felt so *angry*, 'cause I thought if M. Knew the boy was on the stairs he oughtn't to o' come down, not only for the humiliation the first day, but because I didn't even know Mr. Reeves kept a lad as clerk. So I was really in a passion & I said a great deal I didn't *mean*, & I declared that if M. tantalised me in that way again I would leave him whether we was married or not, for I didn't care a straw for that. Of course I meant that for the moment, for I felt I couldn't stand do be treated as such a 'nothing' & with no consideration after having ... [unreadable] so much all these years, & coming at last to be only as a servant to everyone's eyes except his. (255)

This particular fight (which is eventually resolved) is especially important as an indication of the threat Cullwick's anger poses to their relationship and as a foreshadowing of the rupture which ends their cohabitation within a few years after their marriage. After this fight, Cullwick writes:

> For if M. Had gone on, speaking to me crossly or sharp as he used to Mrs. Mitchell, I know I shd go out o' my mind, & a very bad end would come to him as well as to me, for I canna bear it, altho' I'm humble, & wish to be only like a *servant*. But for *him* I've sacrificed so much & *done* so much for, & loved so unselfishly & disinterestedly, that I will *not* be mock'd nor deceived.

The anger Cullwick experiences at her subordination, (an anger which Munby misrecognizes for as long as he possibly can) is

thus also a *literal* threat to Munby--"a very bad end would come to him" if he continued to provoke her.

Cullwick's diaries, then, show us the complex struggle for a positive identity that faced working-class women moving to the industrial city from rural agricultural areas. All of their relations--economic, familial, communal--were changing. McClintock perceptively identifies the fetish rituals in which Cullwick and Munby engaged as embodying the signifiers of the new state power. While her relationship to Munby did certainly provide a theater for dramatizing the power struggles of changing class and gender relations, the relationship could not resolve these conflicts. It is, however, in the failure of Cullwick's strategies that contemporary feminists may see ourselves reflected. Our means of negotiating power inequalities may have more in common with Cullwick's than we would care to admit. Cullwick's diaries, like the other women's autobiographies I've examined, can suggest possibilities for a feminist re-construction of gender identities in the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

A "conclusion," of course, must address the issue of relevance--in what way is a study of Victorian tropes of prostitution and the restructuring of working-class families significant to contemporary readers? And how might this study be useful to a feminist revision of gender roles and power

relations? In its broadest sense, this study indicates the degree to which our contemporary rhetoric is still very much embedded in Victorian legal, medical, political, social and fictional constructions of class and gender. Contemporary fear responses to A.I.D.S. (including the call for compulsory A.I.D.S. testing and the desire to isolate and confine A.I.D.S. patients) echo Victorian discourses and practices legitimating passage of the Contagious Diseases Acts. Political rhetoric demonizing the "welfare mother" and lamenting the disintegration of the "family" invoke Victorian discourses of fallenness. And the pervasive fears of the impoverished and dangerous working-classes (generally racialized in America as *black)* over-running the safe domain of middle-class respectability closely parallel Victorian fears of the dangerous working-classes.

Far from being so much more "enlightened" than the Victorians, we are, in some very crucial ways, still playing out race, class, and gender roles that were largely scripted in the nineteenth century. While it is often difficult for us to see outside of our own ideological constructions, a hundred years' distance may allow us to identify the logical fallacies of those Victorian discourses with which we have so much in common, and to generalize from them to our own ideological traps. As a case in point, the discourse of women's purity central to Victorian constructions of the domestic woman may seem, in the 1990's U.S.A., to be outdated. The sexual

liberation rhetoric of the '60's, the relative accessibility of birth control, and civil rights advances allowing women greater educational and professional opportunities have enabled many women to escape the punitive effects of gender codes which define as "fallen" women who have premarital sex, illegitimate children, or cohabit with men without benefit of legal marriage But we read Victorian discourses of purity in the still pervasive double standard by which sexually active unmarried women are easily labeled "sluts" while sexually active unmarried men are still rewarded for their masculine prowess. More insidiously, the history of rape trials reveals the impossibility of separating discourses of purity from contemporary laws defining and punishing rape. The notorious legal strategy of constructing raped women as sexual temptresses and, by virtue of previous sexual activity, *whores*, still makes it extremely difficult for rape victims to bring cases to trial, and virtually impossible for them to secure a conviction.

Victorian discourses of domesticity also inflect women's everyday lives. Women's magazines from *Ms* to *Redbook* feature articles lamenting the sad fact that women still perform the vast majority of household labor. Stories of men "helping" with the dishes or doing the once-a-month load of laundry have become common-place jokes. Significantly, such stories are not class-specific: *housework* is, by definition, *women's* work, and both middle- and working-class women form gender

identities around beliefs that *women* cook, clean, and care for husbands and children. The gendered division of labor which constructs the house as women's domain and housework as women's work is commonly configured as a problem because it places a double burden of labor on women who also work outside the home. We must, however, be suspicious of representations which take for granted women's role as homemaker and construct the gendered quality of domestic labor as a problem for women who move outside of the home (i.e., outside of their natural sphere) to work. As many feminist activists and scholars have pointed out (and as this study bears witness to), "home" and the "domestic woman" are relatively recent, historically specific constructions. While bourgeois women could remain within the home to supervise the family and manage its resources, working-class women could not. Victorian efforts to domesticate working-class women relied upon convincing them to *add domestic labor* to their *already existing market labor*; contemporary debates about the unequal division of labor *assume women's domestic labor*, which becomes unfairly burdensome to them only when they *add market labor* to their already existing *domestic labor*.

The Victorians effected an important ideological shift which redefined working-class women: they went from being seen as primarily *workers* who must be taught domestic duties, to being seen as *housewives* who enter the paid labor market. Understanding this ideological shift begs us to call into

question all of our preconceptions about women's *work*. Indeed, feminists continue to challenge the social and political practices limiting women's *sphere*. Women are entering traditionally male arenas such as competitive sports and the military. We are achieving higher levels of professional and political power. But we are met, at every level and with every new challenge, with old gender definitions which are used to legitimate women's exclusion from the public (male) sphere.

Since our contemporary understanding of gender derives from Victorian ideologies, our understanding of the evolution of modern gender identities can be a valuable tool in a feminist politics which seeks to redefine gender. The records of the Lock Hospital and Asylum, police and medical reports, and Foundling Hospital illuminate the historical development of the "domestic" woman and the important relationship between the cult of domesticity and nationalism, capitalism, and imperialism. Novels show us how legal, medical, social, political, and fictional discourses produce and are produced by each other. And, most importantly, working-class women's self-representations chart individual women's confrontations with their society's restrictive gender roles.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

I launched my academic "career" in 1980 at the relatively young age of sixteen, and at the most inasupicious of colleges, Valencia Community College, in Orlando, Florida. I consider my entry into college as my point of origin: for the first time in my life, I experienced an intellectual freedom and a hope that had been absent in my life until then. I had great pleasure editing my college newspaper, writing for the literary magazine, and hobnobbing with my instructors. In August of 1982 I moved to Saratoga Springs, New York, where I spent a semester at the Parson's Design Project of the New School for Social Research. I then went to Lake Tahoe in December of 1982 and attended Sierra Nevada College, Incline Village, Nevada, for a quarter. After a year of snow and creative writing, I moved to Honolulu Hawaii, where in 1985 I finished my Bachaleor of Arts degree in English. My next sojourn was to San Diego, California, where, in 1987, I earned my Master of Arts degree from the University of California at San Diego in English and American Literature. For the next several years, I taught high school at Trenton High School, Trenton, Florida, and as an adjunct instructor at Santa Fe Community College, Gainseville, Florida. I entered the Ph.D. program in English Literature at the University of Florida in

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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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